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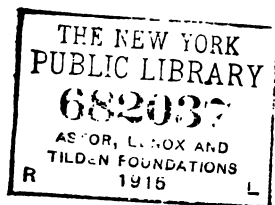
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PREFACE.

THE design of this work is to furnish an outline of the life of Jesus, in such manner that the picture may be presented to the mind of a child with some degree of entirety. From reading the Gospels themselves children are apt to derive only a mass of incidents, which bear little relation to each other, and fail to make a clear or continuous story. The attempt is here made to give the narrative with enough incident to provide it with color and form, yet without so much detail as would confuse its effect upon the youthful mind.

It is, of course, difficult to teach children the real motives and purposes of Jesus. But one may hope and believe that enough can be done in this direction to establish in their memory a groundwork or plan of the great theme, which will grow in after years to a more intelligent appreciation of his work and character than can be attained when such an outline is wholly wanting.

The value of every text-book depends largely upon the way in which it is used; and the author of this book feels, in a particular sense, that without the active co-operation of teachers his work will have been in vain. His anxiety on this point must be his excuse for offering the following suggestions:—

The teacher should read as much as possible in the books to which references are given, but should not attempt to impart to pupils all the knowledge thus attained. It will be well to avoid introducing topics not touched upon in the chapter under consideration, unless the teacher feels that such topics may be profitably substituted for those of which the chapter treats.

Children should be encouraged to ask questions; but it is a teacher's business to direct rather than to follow a child's curiosity. Questions which lead off to unimportant matters should be put aside, while no pains should be spared to quicken interest in what is vital to the main course of the narrative.

Briefly, the point to aim at is the creation of a distinct and reasonable likeness of the man Jesus; and that aim may be easily defeated by attempting to get too much into the picture.

There is a certain advantage in putting the thought of Jesus into new words. Children have often heard the Gospels read, and are apt to associate familiar expressions with imperfect ideas derived from them in earlier years. These crude conceptions are broken up by a new phraseology, even though it be not so good as the old, and meant only to serve this temporary purpose.

No one method can be prescribed for all teachers; but the following may answer in detail of a better:—

Let a chapter be read aloud by the teacher or some member of the class, and afterward some portion of the Scripture upon which the chapter is based. Then questions and conversation should follow, until what has been read is made plain. In proportion as the text is supplemented by questions and illustrations supplied from the mind of the teacher, will the effectiveness of the *teaching* be increased.

Let it be borne in mind that this book is, at most, only a help. Nothing of the kind can be successfully used without judgment and discrimination. It increases rather than diminishes the need for intelligence and preparation on the teacher's part. If it serve to stimulate and direct the exertions of those who undertake to impart Sunday-school instruction, unsatisfactory though it be in itself, it will fulfil the highest wish that can be entertained on its behalf.

H. N. B.

BROOKLINE, July, 1884.

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LIFE OF JESUS.

PART FIRST.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

ONE of the parables by means of which Jesus so beautifully illustrated his teachings, likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a grain of mustard seed, — “the least of all seeds,” but which when it is grown “becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

The history of religion is the story of a growth, like that of some great tree, which sprang from a little seed dropped in the earth many years ago. If one were to scatter acorns over a field, many of them would be eaten up or carried away by animals; others would be destroyed in various ways; and out of the many, only a few here and there would take root. But when these few had grown up into shrubs, cattle would browse upon them and break them down; winter storms and summer drought would kill them; and perhaps only one among them all, by reason of hardier life or more sheltered position, would survive every accident, and grow up to the full stature of an oak.

So, far back in the past the world was full of little local religions. Each tribe, each family, had a god and a worship of its own; and besides this, there were many places in which

different gods were supposed to dwell. Like scattered acorns, most of these religions perished. A few took root and grew for a time. One among these, in which we are particularly interested, — the religion of the Hebrew people, — manifested from the start a vigorous life. Although during the wars and tumults of those times the Hebrews suffered dreadful misfortunes, nothing could kill their religion. Like a hardy young oak, the more fiercely the storms beat upon it, the better it seemed to thrive.

At first, and for many hundred years, this religion was confined to the Hebrew people, like a shrub planted in a vase. But in the time of Christ it burst through this vase, to strike its roots widely abroad; and, known since then by the name of Christianity, it has continued to grow with astonishing rapidity.

As we are to study the life of Jesus, it will be well to state at the outset, in a general way, what part he played in this growth of our religion.

The first step in religious progress was to do away with the multitude of gods worshipped in early times, and confine a whole nation to the worship of one Deity. This was done in the early life of the Hebrews; though Jehovah, or Yahweh, whom they came to acknowledge as their one God, was supposed by them, for a long time, to be only the God of their own nation, and they did not think He ruled over or cared for other people.

The next step was to teach the Hebrews that their one God had made and ruled over all things, and that there were no gods beside Him. This is the lesson they were learning during their later history, down to the time of Christ; though as yet they supposed that God loved only their own nation, and would at last make them conquerors and rulers over all the world.

The third great step was to bring men to the full truth that the one God whom the Jews worshipped under the name of Jehovah is Lord over all and Father of all; that the people of all races are His children, and that all are equally watched over by His love and care. This last and most important step of all, religion took under the guidance of Jesus. He it was who first taught all men to look up to the same Father in Heaven.

Now if he had done nothing more than proclaim that all races and all people should worship the one true God, who is a Spirit, and of whom no image or picture can be made, this alone would have been of immense value. For to make all men children of one Father, is to make them all brothers; and as they learn this truth they look upon each other more kindly, so that hatred and warfare between them begin to give way to a reign of peace. It is true that nations still go to war, but they undertake it only as a stern and awful necessity, and do not love fighting as they once did, for its own sake. In old times, what with constant battle and bloodshed, it was like living always in a fearful thunder-storm. But now the cloud is slowly rolling away; the thunder is dying in the distance, and we are hoping for the time when it shall entirely cease. We could have no such hope to-day had not Jesus lived to tell the world that the one true God whom the Jews thought to be their Father alone, caring only for their worship, is the Father of all that live, whose love for every human being makes all men brothers in His sight.

But to this truth Jesus added many others, through the knowledge of which religion is purified, and all life becomes happier and better.

He taught his followers not to think of God as a great angry man, of whom they must be afraid, but to love and trust Him as a friend, who only seeks to do good.

He made his disciples give up all thought of winning the favor of Heaven by means of religious rites alone, and taught them to try to please God by showing Him good lives and pure hearts.

He turned the dim and dreary ideas of a future life, which made men think of the hereafter with a shudder, into bright and hopeful anticipations of a heaven in every way more beautiful than this world, and filled with more love and gladness.

These are some of the truths he taught; and so much new hope and joy did his teachings bring to men, that they called the whole story of his life "Good News," or "Glad Tidings;" for this is what our word Gospel means. It was "good news," indeed, that he brought to earth as a message from God. Never

were words spoken by other mortal lips so full of good for all who receive them into their souls. Never was a heart more loving or more lovable than his. No story possesses such deep interest for all who love what is good and true, as that of Jesus of Nazareth, who gave up his whole life to the work which his Father in Heaven had called him to do, and who was put to death by ignorant men, as if he had been a criminal, because they could not understand the "good news" he told them.

II.

BIRTH.

LUKE II. 1-20.

OF the early life of Jesus of Nazareth — called Christ — we know very little, save what we can gather from our general knowledge of the country and time. Our ignorance of this subject is not however exceptional, for many great men have left us little account of their boyhood. The great poet Shakespeare, for example, was born only 300 instead of 1800 years ago ; yet we know little more of his youth than of the childhood of Jesus.

One reason why the Gospels do not tell us more about this, is that the men who first wrote the life of Jesus probably cared little about him as a boy or young man. They gave all their attention to the few years of his ministry ; and not until all who knew about his early life had long been dead, did much interest in that period of his history arise. This part of the story will not therefore long detain us.

In the northern part of the country of Palestine, in the province of Galilee, and bordering on the great plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, which is like a green sea lying among the encircling hills, is perched the little village of Nazareth. It is built in terraces upon the steep hillside, which towers high above it, broken here and there by sharp precipices of rock. To-day, amid the ruin of all that country, it is one of the most attractive places that the traveller finds ; for lying toward the south, and being sheltered from the north winds by the hills at its back, it is still green with olive trees and palms. Eighteen hundred years ago, when almost every inch of the hillsides about it was highly cultivated, Nazareth must have been a beautiful spot.

Here then lived a carpenter named Joseph, with his young wife Mary. They were poor people, and yet not much worse off than their neighbors, for nobody then was either very rich or very poor. All had enough to eat, drink, and wear; and almost any kind of house would do, in a climate where the people could sleep out of doors a large part of the year.

Although Joseph earned his living by working with his hands, yet he is said to have belonged to a very distinguished family, for his ancestor David was the first great king of the Hebrews, and the founder of their royal city of Jerusalem. In eastern lands family relationships have been carefully kept for hundreds of years. Among the Arabs, the descendants of their great prophet Mahomet are all known, and strangers may distinguish them, by the green turban which is their badge.

This statement that Joseph was of royal descent is made important in the story, as told by the writers of the Gospels, in several ways. Just here we must speak of it, because it furnished the occasion of a journey taken by Joseph, not very long after his marriage. It is said that about this time the Governor of the country sent out a decree that every man should go to his old family home, there to be registered and taxed. Joseph, therefore, being of the "House of David," had to go to Bethlehem, which was David's native city, and from which therefore all David's family had come.

It seems to have been late in the season, after the harvest was gathered, that this decree went forth. So when the November rains were over and the skies were once more warm and clear, we may imagine Joseph setting forth on his journey with his young wife. There were no wagons or public conveyances, but then, as now in that country, the donkey furnished almost the only assistance in travelling.

Behold them then descending the steep path which leads from the village, down to the valley, — Mary seated upon the donkey's back, while Joseph walks by her side. Slowly they pace down the hillside and out upon the broad plain.

It was about a three days' journey to Bethlehem, the road leading southward through Jerusalem, and some six miles

beyond it. They were perhaps longer than this on the way, and when they reached their destination, the whole place was already filled with strangers, so that they could find no room at the inn.

The best they could do was to lodge in a stable, which was perhaps one of the little caves dug out of the rocky hill upon which Bethlehem is built. Here they could rest after their long journey, on clean fresh straw; and here, soon after their arrival, a little babe was born to them whose name they called Jesus.

As if God wished to show the world of how little value in His sight were earthly rank and riches, the man whom He raised up to be the greatest teacher about heavenly things was born in the very humblest condition. To make it perfectly plain that Christ's power came from God, he was sent upon earth without any advantage of wealth or social position. If one wished to show the brilliancy of a new lamp, he would put out all other lights in the room; because some might say, "Part of the light comes from the candles." If Jesus had been born a king's son, we might think the wonderful influence he had over others came partly from his princely station. But because he was born to be a teacher of God's truth, we can see what power that truth gives to all who speak it.

This night on which Jesus was born there were shepherds in the fields which lie about Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks; and we are told that, amid the stillness which reigns over nature when all things are hushed in sleep, these shepherds heard the angels singing in heaven,— "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!" The song was not heard in the city where people were asleep in their houses, but only by those who chanced to be awake out under the open sky. Doubtless there was joy in heaven when Jesus was born. For the angels would know what a great work the little babe then lying in a manger would live to perform; and as they shared God's love for the world, they would rejoice that one had been born among men who would help all to find their way to heaven.

So on that first Christmas so long ago, though the world awoke to take up its customary round of daily duties, and none dreamed that anything unusual had taken place during the night, or that the morning was one which marked the beginning of a new chapter in the world's life, yet God and the angels knew that in the darkness a great treasure had been given to men. All unconscious of his future greatness, the infant Jesus slept in his mother's arms, and only those above saw what joys and sorrows, what a painful death and glorious triumph, awaited him.

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Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. pp. 1-22, 38-131; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chap. ii., ix. ; "Bible for Young People," vol. v. chap. iii. ; "Bible for Learners," vol. iii. book i. chap. iii. ; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chap. i.

III.

EARLY CHILDHOOD.

THOUGH Jesus is said to have been born while his parents were visiting in Bethlehem, yet Nazareth remained their home, and it was there that Jesus lived as a child and young man. How we should like to know in what way his time was spent! How did he dress? What games did he play? What duties did he have to perform? Where did he go to school, and what did he learn? Was he serious and retiring, or lively and active, in the sports of his playfellows?

Alas! it is not much that we can find to answer these questions. We may guess a little what kind of boy he must have been, to grow up into such a man as he became. But when we come to particulars, that is only guessing after all. We know something of the lives of children generally at that time, though not much of any one child. We can partly satisfy our curiosity from the accounts of travellers who have visited Nazareth in recent years, for it has not changed much since Jesus as a child played in its streets.

In the first place the women and children of Nazareth are quite handsome, and must have been so always; for there has been no improvement, but rather a gradual decline in the country and its people since the time of Christ. Mary, the mother of Jesus, may well have been as graceful and beautiful as any of the women with large dark eyes who still go to and fro, as she did, between the village and the fountain, bearing their water-jars upon their shoulders. And her young son we may imagine to have been like the hearty, bright-eyed children who roam over the neighboring hillsides, filling the air with their laughter. They dress in much brighter colors than we are accustomed to wear, their garments being made of cotton and silken fabrics, dyed in all the hues of the rainbow. Black, sparkling eyes;

black, curling hair; oval face; dark complexion; strong and active limbs,—such probably was the appearance of the boy who once played with his companions among the groves and vineyards of Nazareth,—he and they alike ignorant of the great powers hidden in his young heart.

His home we may think of as a low one-story building, with vines running over it, and with doves sunning themselves upon its flat roof. It had perhaps only one, and at most only two or three rooms. It stood close upon the street, and a single step carried one through its only door into the living-room. Beside the door stood the water-jars, covered with leaves or branches to keep the water cool. Within, one found no table or chairs, for it is the eastern custom to sit on mats spread upon the floor, and food is placed before the guest upon a low stool. From the centre of the ceiling hung the brass lamp, and about the sides of the room ran a broad shelf, with bright-colored quilts rolled into bundles placed upon it, which served as a bed at night.

It was in such a home that Jesus lived. But though it had none of the beauties and comforts of our homes, no books or pictures, or more than the simplest furniture, yet these humble homes of Palestine held often as much love and good manners and purity of life as any household of modern times. The relations between parents and children were very beautiful among the Jews. Children were taught the most exact obedience, but they truly honored their fathers and mothers, without being afraid of them; and parents took the most loving care and were very proud of the young lives God had intrusted to their keeping.

As to the child Jesus in his play, not much can be told. Once afterward, in his teaching, he referred to some game which he had doubtless shared as a boy, but what it was we can only dimly imagine (Mat. xi. 16). He had no story-books, and few if any toys. Most of his hours of play must have been spent out of doors, and were probably largely occupied in rambling over the neighboring hills. He afterward displayed great love for nature, and we may be sure that he knew all the birds and wild-flowers to be found in the fields and vineyards near his home.

Even as a boy we may fancy him watching the birds as they built their nests and cared for their young, thinking of the goodness of God, who had made the earth for them as well as for human kind, and had so abundantly provided for the wants of those who could neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns.

Then there were the vineyards, the harvest-fields, the wine-presses, and the threshing-floor to be visited. All these places were full of life and gayety; and among the laughing, good-natured laborers a boy need never lack for amusement.

There was one spot which perhaps became very early his favorite place of resort. As a man he liked hills and mountains, and behind his village home is one hill from which there is a beautiful view. Standing there, one can look southward across the plain, far away toward Jerusalem. Northward, there is a sea of hill-tops stretching in the distance to snow-crowned Mt. Hermon, sixty miles away. Eastward, hills again, rising beyond the Sea of Galilee and the valley of the Jordan. Westward, gleams the blue water of the Mediterranean, dotted with white sails, and shining like silver where the sun touches it.

Here Jesus must often have climbed in his boyhood to look longingly toward the Holy City, of which his people talked so much. Perhaps also his eyes would often turn seaward, attracted not only by the beauty of the scene, but by a vague curiosity about the greater world of Greece and Rome, toward which the far-off ships were sailing.

Nazareth was a quiet little place among the hills, but even to its market-place would come travellers with tales to tell of the splendor and magnificence of the great cities they had visited. A boy's imagination is soon stirred by such stories, and we can fancy what wondering dreams of the vast kingdoms of the world, and of the kings who ruled over them, would fill the mind of the young Jesus, as he stood upon the summit of this hill, overlooking the wide scene spread out on every side.

Like all boys he had his tasks to perform, and probably began when quite young to work with his hands. Among Greeks and Romans all manual labor was thought to be degrading, and to belong to slaves. But the Jews, more like ourselves, honored

the workman. They thought it necessary that every boy should learn a trade; and very likely Jesus, as soon as he was strong enough, had work given him in his father's shop.

His schooling was a much more simple affair than that of children in these days, and he was undoubtedly taught for the most part at home. There was nothing to learn save reading and writing. There was nothing for him to read save the book which we call the Old Testament, and the explanations given of it by the Rabbis. This was long before the invention of the printing-press, and all books were written; though they were not what we call books, but simply long strips of writing rolled upon round sticks, like a map. Moreover, it was not the language which he spoke that Jesus learned to read. He talked what is called Aramaic, a Syrian dialect. The Books of the Law were written in ancient Hebrew, which was no longer spoken by the people, so that learning to read was for him like our learning to read German. But though Jesus had not so much to learn, he learned that little well. A great part of the Psalms and writings of the Prophets he could repeat from memory. Their lofty words were full of moral and religious instruction, and the study of them gave Jesus the best training he could possibly have had for the work he was to do.

During six days of the week, then, he worked and played, and learned his lessons, much as all children do. Through the discipline of obedience at home; through his study of the sayings of wise and holy men, written in the Sacred Books; through his rambles over the fields, and his love for nature, — in these ways his young mind received its training.

What he did on the seventh day of the week we must see in another chapter.

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For description of life in Galilee see Hausrath's "New Testament Times," vol. i. first division, "Galilee;" Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. pp. 22-38, 131-200; "Bible for Young People," vol. v. chap. v.; "Bible for Learners," vol. iii. book i. chap. vi.; Renan's "Life of Jesus," chap. ii. iii.; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chap. xii.; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chap. v. vii.

IV.

CHILDHOOD (*Continued*).

THE Jewish Sabbath is the last day of the week instead of the first; that is, Saturday instead of Sunday. It begins Friday evening at sunset and lasts till sunset on Saturday. With the Jews it was then, in most severe sense, a holy day, rather than a holiday, and they were very strict in its observance. No one was allowed to do any kind of work, not even to prepare food, during this day. On Friday afternoon the housewife must have a sufficient store of things to eat in readiness to last over till Saturday night. If the family had a fire lighted when the Sabbath commenced, they must not allow it to go out; if they had no fire, they must not kindle one till the Sabbath was over. No one could carry any burden, not even the smallest bundle through the streets, without incurring severe punishment. No one could take a walk beyond a certain limited distance, called a "Sabbath-day's journey," which was a little less than three quarters of a mile.

Of course no play of any kind was allowed, and the day must have been a hard one for children. They could read and talk, and go to the synagogue, which was the Jewish Church, but they could not do anything for pleasure. We shall see later on that Jesus did not look upon the Sabbath as other people did; and we may well believe that his opinions on this subject dated from the time, when as a boy, shut up in the small stifling house, he longed for the pure air and freedom of the hills.

But the great relief of the day was the service in the synagogue, which everybody attended, and to which Jesus must have gone gladly with his parents. Let us imagine ourselves going with him for once, and see wherein it was different from going to church.

As we approach the entrance, we notice a small knot of men gathered about a sort of bulletin board. They are reading the names posted there, — names of men who have misbehaved, and have been forbidden to enter the synagogue. Beside the door are small boxes, into which the people as they pass drop money, to be given to the poor.

Inside, we find that the space occupied by the seats is divided into two portions by a low partition, which is yet too high for any one to look over. On one side of this partition sit the men, and on the other side the women. A little beyond the middle of the room is a raised platform, and from its centre rises a low pulpit, or reading-desk. Beyond this, at the opposite end of the building, is a small recess in the wall, with a curtain hanging across its entrance, before which a lamp is kept always burning, to represent the fire upon the altar of the great temple at Jerusalem. Within this recess stands an ark, or chest, which contains the Sacred Books. Against this end of the building, and facing the congregation, are the seats of the rulers and officers of the synagogue.

Very noiselessly the people come in, for they have left their wooden sandals at the door, and the patter of their bare feet upon the floor does not disturb the stillness of the place. Then, as the minister or reader mounts the platform, all stand up and engage for a moment in silent prayer. The people still standing, the reader begins to recite the written prayers which make up the first part of the service, the congregation responding to each prayer a fervent "Amen."

After the prayers are finished there is a reading from the Books of the Law, in ancient Hebrew, an interpreter translating the reading, verse by verse, into the common tongue. Then follow more prayers and another scripture-reading from the writings of the prophets. This ends the devotional part of the service; and now comes the sermon.

The rulers of the synagogue invite whomever they please to speak to the congregation, there being no regular preacher. Any distinguished stranger, or any member of the congregation, may be asked to mount the platform and give his explanation of

what has been read. This part of the service becomes more like a lecture, for the people utter applauding words if they are pleased, and express their disagreement if they do not like what is said. Other speakers rise to give their views, so that it threatens to become rather a hot debate, and seems likely to stretch out to a great length. Finally, however, the reader comes forward and recites the closing prayers, a benediction is said, and the people disperse. It is, after all, quite like going to church; only there is no music, and if the preacher does not suit the people, they feel at liberty to show their dislike openly.

There were services both morning and afternoon on the Sabbath, and, besides these, regular services on Mondays, Thursdays, and all feast days. On the whole, there must have been considerable church-going in Nazareth, — rather more than we are accustomed to, — and the child Jesus probably went with his parents very often.

What effect can we suppose it had upon him? A great deal of the service must have been very beautiful and impressive. The people were devout and full of feeling, and there were many really sublime expressions, both in the prayers and the scripture-readings. But there were other things not so satisfactory to a childish mind. Some of the people made too much display of their piety, kissing the fringes of their garments during the service in a way that seemed more affected than real. Then it was evident that the few men privileged to occupy the chief seats felt altogether more important and grand oftentimes than any one ought to feel during a religious service. The sermons, or addresses, were not always very interesting, and though it may be said that children always have to suffer from this cause, still preachers now-a-days do not often talk about such trivial and unimportant matters as seem to have occupied a great deal of the attention of the Jews.

Jesus undoubtedly saw in the synagogue a deep, true spirit of religion; but he saw also a hypocritical attempt to put on the appearance of being very religious. Both these different things would make a strong impression on him, and as much as he revered the one he would despise the other.

And now, can we suppose that if we had lived then, and had met this boy in his home, upon the street, or in the synagogue, we should have seen anything in him to attract attention or win our liking? We cannot suppose anything else. "Men do not gather figs of thistles," as he himself said; and no unlovable boy can grow up as he did into a lovable man. We must believe that the instant one looked into his clear honest eyes, one felt, "Here is a boy who will do nothing mean or underhanded, and who will always prove a generous, unselfish friend." He was good-natured, and yet it was not easy to abuse his good nature; for he was never afraid to speak his mind, and knew how to make a few stinging words answer as well as a blow in reproof of wrong-doing. He was not quick-tempered, and yet could get very indignant with what was wrong and unfair. He never cared so much what was done to himself as what was done to others; and more than once he stood between weaker children and the abuse with which they were threatened by the stronger. He was social and full of life, yet there were times when he liked best to be alone. He was always somewhat old for his years, and thought much about things with which other boys never bothered their heads.

Thoughtful, but not sad; good and pure, but not given to setting himself up as a pattern to others; happy in disposition, but never boisterous,—there was in his character, we must believe, from his earliest years, a certain mixture of gentleness and strength, which quickly won from others love and respect.

Such must have been the boy, and such as we have seen were some of his employments, whose name has become the greatest name in history, and to whose life as a man the world pays every year an increasing tribute of reverence and love.

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V.

THE VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

LUKE II. 42-52.

WHEN Jesus was twelve years old he took what was probably his first journey, accompanying his father and mother to Jerusalem. In Eastern lands children, like plants, develop more rapidly than with us. We fix upon twenty-one as the age when young men and women attain their majority ; but among the Jews a boy became of age at thirteen. After that he was a "Son of the Law," bound to observe all the requirements of religion.

The purpose of this visit to Jerusalem was to take part in the great feast — or, as we should say, celebration — of the Passover. There were three of these yearly festivals among the Jews, — the Passover, the Pentecost, and the Tabernacles. But the Passover was the greatest of all, and lasted a whole week. It came in the spring of the year, about the time of our Easter, and at this time thousands upon thousands of Jews, from all parts of Palestine and from all over the world, flocked to Jerusalem. The city could not hold all the visitors, and for a long distance outside the walls booths and tents were built to shelter the multitude.

The journey must have been a great event in the hitherto quiet life of Jesus. The people went from distant places, like Nazareth, in large companies or caravans, both for the sake of society and for safety, as travellers were none too secure from robbers. They took with them such bands of music as they had in those days, tents in which to camp at night, and long lines of animals — camels and donkeys — laden with provisions, cooking utensils, and camp furniture. Three nights the caravan

from Galilee would camp out on the road, and each day on the march there would be music and singing. As they passed through the various villages on their way, all the people would flock out to see the long procession pass, and the pilgrims would chant in chorus one of their inspiring psalms.

Was there ever a child twelve years old to whom this picturesque mode of travelling would not be delightful? To ride and walk all day through new scenes, breathing the soft spring air; to eat food cooked over a great open fire; to assist in saddling and driving the pack animals; and to sleep in a tent at night, — surely this is happiness enough for any healthy child.

But more than the pleasures of the way, Jesus must have thought of what was to be seen at the end of the journey! the holy city of Jerusalem, with its great Temple, its massive walls and gates, its crowded streets, and multitude of shops full of rich merchandise. It was the city where the kings of the nation had lived and reigned. Almost every stone of it was associated with sacred memories. Every Jew loved it as a mother, and always turned his face toward it when he prayed. Morning, noon, and night Jesus had been reminded of it, and had heard of its glories from his earliest years. How his heart must have beat, when at the end of the long journey the road, winding among the hills, made its last turn, and there, shining in the sun, rose up the white mass of the city, crowned by the gilded roofs and marble pillars of the lofty Temple!

The week which followed was largely given up to religious ceremonies. Every day there was a stately service in the Temple which we should consider rather barbarous, — one of its features being the slaughter of great numbers of innocent lambs and goats. Probably Jesus did not care very much about these services, though the chanting of the priests and the sound of their trumpets must have been rather fine.

Naturally he would spend much time in sight-seeing, for there were many places of historic interest to be visited; and to one coming from a quiet country village, city life always presents many things new and strange.

But there was one place to which, above all others, Jesus was

attracted, — and this shows us how wise and thoughtful he was for one of his years. The Temple enclosed large, open spaces called courts. One of these was named the Court of the Gentiles, and from it opened spacious chambers, or porches, in which the Rabbis sat and taught the sacred laws. These Rabbis were the wisest of the nation, and like our judges and senators were the famous men of the day. Any one was free to go into these rooms and listen to their teaching, or even to ask questions and state his opinions, if he seemed to know anything about the subject being discussed. The Jewish Doctors of the Law were rather fond too, it is said, of presenting questions to a bright boy, for the sake of seeing what his fresh, unprejudiced mind would make of them. In these schools of the Rabbis, as we shall see, Jesus found himself deeply interested.

The festival-week being ended, the visitors poured out of Jerusalem as fast as they had entered it, setting forth again in large companies for their distant homes. On the day of departure Jesus became separated from his parents in some manner. How, we are not told. Perhaps there was a spare hour or two which he wished to use in walking about, and so he went out by himself, agreeing to meet the caravan at a certain time and place. But as there were no clocks, and distances in a city are very deceptive, he might easily have miscalculated the time, and arrived too late. However the separation occurred, his parents kept on with the rest, supposing him to be somewhere in the crowd. Perhaps their fears were quieted by a rumor that some one had seen him with his companions; and not until they camped for the night did they find that he was nowhere in the company. It was not safe to travel in the dark, but in the morning they turned back with anxious hearts, — how anxious we can imagine, by thinking how we should feel if some child dear to us were lost in the mazes of a great strange city. Arriving at Jerusalem again, they began to search for him, but when darkness came they had not found him. Probably they had lived during the festival in some temporary shelter now torn down, so that Jesus could not come back at night to any place where they would go to meet him. They seem also to have

looked in many places where there was little chance of finding him, and not to have gone at once to the one spot where he was sure to be. But at last, sometime on the third day of the separation, tired and half distracted we may be sure, they went to the Temple. There they found him, sitting among the Doctors of the Law, not only listening to them, but asking questions, — questions so full of insight and knowledge that the doctors were much astonished.

His mother, joyful as she was to behold him, could not at once forget the days and nights of anxiety that had passed. She said, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I sought thee sorrowing!" And Jesus wonderingly replied, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

The answer shows that Jesus supposed his parents would come directly to the Temple for him, as a matter of course. We see here the perfect trust of his youthful heart. Separated from his earthly father and mother, he had gone directly to his heavenly Father's house, in full confidence that he was safe there, and that his parents would return there to find him. We see, also, in this incident how deep his interest already was in great and holy things. He was not found watching the priests in their gorgeous ceremonies, but among the teachers who spoke of what is right and true in the sight of God. Even at an age which is apt to be charmed with fine spectacles, Jesus cared nothing about external shows in religion, but only to know God and to be obedient to His will.

After this, Jesus returned with his parents to their home in Nazareth; and there he continued to dwell, "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

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VI.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

JESUS, having arrived at his thirteenth year, would begin to take more interest in the affairs of the nation ; and we must now try to get some idea of the world with which he was becoming familiar.

The first fact strongly impressed upon his mind must have been that his country was not free. The people could not elect whom they pleased to rule over them, as we do ; nor could they have kings and princes of their own race, as they do in England. They had been conquered by the great Roman Empire, and had to accept such rulers as the Roman Emperor assigned them.

The first of these stranger lords, of whom Jesus would hear much, was Herod Antipas, who ruled over the Province of Galilee in which Jesus lived. And he would hear no good of him, but only expressions of hatred and fear coupled with his name. He was a weak and wicked prince, with a certain kind of low cunning, whom Jesus afterward called " Herod the fox." He was greatly disliked for his own vices, and perhaps still more on his father's account, of whom we must also say a few words.

Herod the Great, as he is commonly called, had been king of all the Jews, and was a man whom all the better part of the nation detested. To begin with, the Jews were a very patriotic people, and to have to submit to any foreign power was hateful to them ; but they especially objected to Herod, because he was not of their race, because he did not come of any princely line, but had risen to the throne from low origin, and because his whole career had been full of crime. He had tried to be a great king, but his own passions and the troubles of the time were more than he could control. Though he had rebuilt the Temple at Jerusalem, and had made it more splendid than ever before,

and though he had driven out the robbers by which the country was infested, still the people looked upon all his good deeds as so many bribes to make them forget his wickedness, and gave him no credit for them. He was cruel, jealous, and suspicious to the last degree ; and his cruelty drove people into plots against him, which he was always detecting and punishing in most bloody fashion. Hundreds upon hundreds he had put to death, — among them his wife, Mariamne, a beautiful Jewish princess, and three of his sons. So little did he care for his own flesh and blood, that the Emperor Augustus once said of him that it was “better to be Herod’s swine than his son.” Another charge against him was that he had built temples in which to worship the Emperor, after the Roman custom. The Jews regarded it as a deadly sin to render to a man the homage that should be paid to God alone. Herod died at length a miserable death, about the time Jesus was born, and we may suppose that the son of such a man would not be greatly loved.

After his death, the sons whom he had not murdered began at once to quarrel over the inheritance, and carried their dispute to Rome. The Emperor made Herod Antipas ruler over the northern province of Galilee (who so continued during the lifetime of Christ), and to his brother Archelaus he gave the southern province of Judea, which contained the great city of Jerusalem.

Archelaus, however, was so bad a ruler that the people grew desperate, and the tumults were so frequent that he was soon deposed. After him, a succession of different governors reigned in Judea, the one best known to us being Pontius Pilate, and of him we shall hear again. One anecdote of him will help to show us the condition of things at this time.

All these Roman governors brought Roman soldiers into the country to support their authority ; and these soldiers were accustomed to carry standards, upon which were the golden eagles of the Empire and silver busts of the Emperor. These images were idols to which the Romans paid divine honors. Now the Jews so hated idolatry that they would not suffer these standards to be brought into their Holy City, and it had been

the custom to leave them at the seaport where the soldiers landed. But when Pilate became governor he ordered the standards to be taken into Jerusalem by night. When the people found them there in the morning, there was great excitement. A large crowd went to Pilate's palace to ask that they might be removed. He would not grant their request ; and five days and nights the crowd remained, making loud and persistent demands that the images should be taken out of their city. At last Pilate sent word to them to meet him in the Circus. The people eagerly obeyed, thinking the Governor was about to yield. But he had no such purpose. He surrounded the place with soldiers, and when the defenceless people were huddled together inside, like sheep in a pen, he suddenly called the soldiers upon them with drawn weapons, threatening to kill them unless they gave up their request and allowed the standards to remain. The people, however, were not in the least frightened or disposed to yield. They dropped upon their knees and bared their necks, telling Pilate that he might kill them if he chose, but they would never be untrue to the commandment God had given them. Sooner would they have their heads cut off, than submit to the practice of idolatry in their city. So Pilate, perceiving that he could not subdue their consciences, ordered the standards removed.

These, then, were the great names of power with which Jesus became familiar as a boy and young man. There was the Emperor Tiberius at Rome under him was Herod Antipas in Galilee ; and in Judea there was a succession of governors, among whom was Pontius Pilate. All these men were cruel and oppressive, and cared nothing about the country, except to get out of it all the money they could in the form of taxes. They abused the people, who were too weak to contend with their foreign soldiers, but who never ceased to hate and despise the government to which they were subjected. Now and again the more hot-headed broke out into open rebellion Jesus must have heard much, in his younger years, of the brave but hopeless fight for freedom made by Judas of Galilee and his followers, which caused a great deal of blood to flow,

but did not at all better the condition of the people (see Acts v. 37).

We may give three reasons why the Jews so hated the government of the Romans :—

1. It was a government of strangers ; and beneath its yoke they felt themselves enslaved, while they longed to be free.

2. Their rulers were bad men, and the Jews feared that God might punish the nation for allowing such men to live among them.

3. They had to pay to these men heavy taxes, which they regarded as stolen from them, and the loss of which kept them poor. The tithes to the priests, commanded by their own law, they continued to pay cheerfully. But in addition to these they were compelled to pay to the Romans a road-tax, a house-tax, a market-tax, a poll-tax, a salt-tax, and, worst of all, a land-tax, — this latter amounting to one tenth of all the grain and two tenths of all the wine and fruit they produced. This was particularly offensive, because the Jews believed that God had given the land to them; and to pay a tax upon it to the Emperor seemed like putting him in the place of God as rightful owner of the soil.

All these taxes were collected by men called Publicans. They were for the most part renegade Jews, who had taken service under the Romans; and the patriotic Jews hated them, if anything, more than they hated the Romans themselves.

Poor Palestine, thus given over to be the prey of men who were little better than blood-thirsty wolves! How the heart of Jesus must have ached for his bleeding and oppressed people, as gradually he came to know the extent of their wrongs and the depth of their distress! How many days, looking abroad over the land from the hill-top above Nazareth, — how many nights, gazing up to the quiet stars, — must he have asked himself over and over again, “Is there then no remedy? Will not God raise up some man to deliver us from the power of these wicked Romans?”

Probably he did not as yet realize that he could do much about it, though we may be sure that he longed to help and save the oppressed, and had many mysterious whisperings in his heart of a great work awaiting him.

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VII.

THE JEWISH SECTS.

WHILE the country of Jesus was thus enslaved and oppressed from without, it was divided into hostile parties within, which made its condition much worse. Had the people all felt and thought and acted together, it would have been more difficult for the Romans to hold them in subjection. But the various parties into which they had divided, hated each other almost as fiercely as they hated the Romans; and this kept them weak before their common enemy. To none of these sects did Jesus ever belong; but he had to learn about them, — and so must we, in order to understand how he regarded them.

We may begin with the sect of the Sadducees, which was made up of the Jewish aristocracy and its adherents. They were the "old families," and are said to have taken their name from a priest called Zadok, who lived in King David's time (1 Kings i. 32). All the priests connected with the Temple belonged to this sect (Acts v. 17). They were the most refined class, having inherited wealth and social position, and were quite friendly with the Romans. In fact, though they did not love their foreign masters, yet as the least of two evils they made friends with them. The Romans appointed them to offices of which they would have been quickly deprived had the nation become free, — for they had not much power with the people, and the great popular party was bitterly opposed to them. Their peculiar beliefs were — first, that only the written Law, as it is in our Old Testament, was to be obeyed; and secondly, that there was no future life. We shall find out the full meaning of these beliefs by contrasting them with the opinions of the Pharisees, who were their opponents.

The Pharisees were a very numerous and powerful party. In

the time of Christ there were about six thousand who bore the name, and there were many thousands more who sympathized with them and followed their lead. The name itself means the "Separated," — for their great aim was to be better and holier than other people, and they were very righteous in their own esteem. The Sadducees, as has been said, obeyed only the written Law ; but the Pharisees had, in addition to this, an oral Law, — that is, one not written down, — which they supposed had been given to Moses by Jehovah. There were also many rules and precepts which their famous Rabbis had prescribed ; and these, too, the Pharisees minutely obeyed. Some of this oral Law was good and wise, but much of it was utterly absurd. For example, it gave minute directions about lighting and taking care of candles at night ; and to light candles in any other way was not only improper in the Pharisees' regard, but was positively wrong. This oral Law said also that it was sinful to eat an egg that had been laid on a festival day, — as if the very fowls were bound to observe religious requirements. There were a great many such petty regulations about food and dress and deportment which we should smile at, even as matters of taste ; and when we find that the Pharisees made it a religious duty to comply with them, they seem really silly. That people should have solemn laws about such things, seems much as if our government should make a law putting men in prison for neglecting to pick up a lady's pocket-handkerchief.

Still, many of the Pharisees did try earnestly and hard to be good, according to their ideas of goodness ; and their faithful obedience to all this oral Law made a great impression on the minds of the people. But there were others among them who had found out what would give them a reputation for saintliness, and who only cared for the praise of men. The Pharisees of this kind were mean, selfish, and cruel at heart, though they appeared so religious outwardly.

The Sadducees taunted them with being all hypocrites, and laughed at the laws by which they governed their conduct. The laws given by Moses they said were quite enough, and contained all God's requirements. But the Pharisees in return called the

Sadducees very irreligious people, and particularly held them up to the scorn of the nation, because they were friendly with the Romans. The Pharisees themselves hated and feared all foreigners, and would have no dealings with them whatever, if they could help it.

The other chief point of disagreement between the two sects was about the future life ; for while the Sadducees taught that the soul died with the body, the Pharisees ardently believed in a world to come. Strange as it may seem to us, the warfare between the two parties was very hot with respect to this doctrine (Acts xxiii. 6, 7). One would think that the Sadducees might have been very glad, at least, to hope for a life hereafter. But it appears that they actually thought such a hope had a bad effect upon men ; that if people looked forward to a future life they would neglect the work and the opportunities of this world. So the two parties called each other bad names, accused each other of all sorts of wickedness, and grew ever more bitter and spiteful in feeling. Must we not suppose that Jesus, as soon as he was old enough to understand what they were talking about, was made indignant by their foolish and passionate controversies ?

We find the Scribes and Pharisees often spoken of together in the Gospels. The leading men among the Pharisees were Scribes, while the leaders of the Sadducees were Priests. There was this great difference between them, that while any one, however humbly born, could become a scribe by study and native talent, one must have been born of a certain family to become a priest. A boy who wished to adopt the profession of a scribe, went to Jerusalem and entered one of the Schools of the Law (like that in the Temple which so interested Jesus). Then, after a long time of training and study he was, as we should say, graduated a scribe. After that he might become a lawyer or a teacher, or rise at last to the office of judge. The most famous scribes were called Rabbis. One of the greatest of these, named Rabbi Hillel, Jesus must have heard quoted frequently, for he was perhaps alive when Jesus was born, and to this day he is remembered by the Jews with great honor.

He left a saying so much like our Golden Rule that we ought to be familiar with it. He said, "What is hateful to thyself, do not to thy neighbor." At this time there was a young Pharisee, named Saul, whom Jesus did not at all know, but who became afterward the Apostle Paul, and the greatest leader of the early Church (Acts xxvi. 5).

Another sect which deserves notice was that of the Essenes. They also were quite numerous, for the Jewish historians tell us that there were about four thousand of them at this time. What their name meant we do not clearly know. We may briefly describe them as Jewish monks, for they lived together in communities by themselves and held all their property in common.

Like the Pharisees, the Essenes were very strict in their obedience to the Law, and were, in fact, Pharisees who had separated themselves from the world, as monks are Catholics who have retired from worldly pursuits. On entering the Society they took a solemn vow to obey all its regulations. They were very good and kind, and also very temperate people, for they lived upon bread, water, and a few vegetables. But the rest of the nation looked upon them with disfavor, because they would have nothing to do with politics, and spoke against both war and commerce. They believed with the Pharisees in a future life, but they went further, and had visions of the spiritual world. They even had names for certain angels, like Uriel, Raphael, Michael, and Gabriel.

Besides these sects we may mention the Nazarites, people who had taken upon themselves certain vows of abstinence, either for a period of days or for life. Something may be learned of them from Numbers vi. 1-21, and from the histories of Samuel and Samson. John the Baptist, also, was a Nazarite for life.

These were the parties and kinds of people which Jesus learned to know in his youth, as children now learn of Republicans and Democrats, Episcopalians, Unitarians, Methodists, etc. But Jesus never belonged to any of these sects. How could he join them? For though there was something good in all of them, yet there was also a great deal of foolishness; and they

were full of sectarian pride and bitterness. Jesus grew up, bearing a certain likeness to the best features of all these sects, but from his youth he must have seen a broader truth than they could comprehend.

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VIII.

THE EXPECTED MESSIAH.

WE have seen how Palestine was oppressed by the Romans, and how the people were divided into quarrelsome parties among themselves. All this time, we must remember, Jesus as he grew up was thinking more and more of the true way to help his country out of the evils and troubles that so afflicted it. Indeed, that was what a great many were thinking about ; and not among the Jews alone, for other countries suffered like Palestine.

We can see that the Romans did much good. They were masters of the world ; and though they held all lands with a strong and cruel grasp, yet they prevented the smaller nations from making war upon each other, and forced them to live and trade together peaceably. The world under them was something like a great prison, where lawless people are made to obey rules of good conduct. Now merely shutting up bad men in prison does not improve them much ; but it gives good people a chance to get at them, and teach them to love what is right and true. So the Roman Empire, which made men stop fighting and brought them all under one government, gave Jesus and his followers an opportunity to teach the world a new love of righteousness and peace.

But at that time very few people saw any good to come out of the Roman rule. They only saw that their liberty was gone, that the soldiers of the Empire did many brutal and shocking things wherever they went, and that they had to pay large sums of money to the Emperor, the loss of which they seriously felt. If a great army should come into our country, take from us a large part of our possessions, arrest and kill our dearest friends for trying to defend their homes, and disregard in every way our

rights and our wishes, it would be very hard for us to see that all this could be of any benefit to us.

The conditions of life had everywhere become so hard as to produce a general feeling that they could not be endured much longer, and that a change must soon occur. The world was so full of oppression and discontent that people felt as if they were living over a volcano, which might at any time break forth. Little signs and rumors occasioned great hope or alarm, as people longed for or dreaded the unknown events that seemed about to transpire.

A story came to Rome, the Capital of the Empire, that while a ship was lying becalmed at sea, the sailors had heard a loud voice coming from a neighboring island, proclaiming the death of the great heathen god Pan. This story troubled the Emperor not a little, for he took it to be a sign of great changes about to come to pass. The augurs at Rome were teaching that the existing period of history was nearly closed, and that a Golden Age would soon begin. Egyptian priests announced that a mysterious bird called the Phoenix, — said to appear only in times when there was a great crisis in the world's affairs, — had once more been seen. So, in many countries, there was an expectation that the Roman rule might soon end.

In Palestine, the people had very definite ideas as to the manner in which they were to be freed from their foreign masters, and of what was then to take place. Hundreds of years before, their great prophets had said that a wonderful King would yet be born to the nation, the wisest and mightiest that the world had ever seen. He would give laws to all mankind, and all nations would come and bow before him. The later prophets took up the strain, and even more clearly and positively foretold the coming of this King of the Jews, who should make himself master of the whole earth. These prophecies had grown into the heart of the people more deeply as their troubles had increased ; and now the men and women among whom Jesus lived were all looking and praying for the coming of this great *Messiah*, — the "Anointed One," — who should teach them all knowledge, and deliver them out of all their woes.

Let us think for a moment what a strange and yet what a sublime hope this was ! It was strange, because, as compared with the great nations on all sides of them, the Jews were neither rich nor strong. Neighboring kings had for centuries crossed and recrossed Palestine, in their wars with each other, making no account of the Jews whatever. Palestine was like a little island out at sea, exposed to storms from every side. Its inhabitants would just begin to recover from one tempest of war, when another would fall upon them from the opposite quarter. They had been plundered, enslaved, and oppressed throughout a good part of their history. Yet it was not any victorious power, but this down-trodden Jew, who first said, "My God is Lord over all the earth, and King of all gods." Nothing could break his spirit or quench his hope ; he answered the scorn of others with a fiercer scorn ; he proudly called his people "God's chosen people ;" in His own good time, he said, God would send the Messiah, and before him the greatest armies of other nations would melt away like smoke.

Fancy a poor, friendless man going about the streets saying that he was the true king of England, and that a messenger would soon come over the seas to summon him to his throne and his crown ! Probably we should all laugh at him and call him crazy. But if one day the messenger came, and the man was suddenly made rich and powerful, we should say that, after all, he knew what he was talking about. This small and poor nation of Jews kept saying that God would send His messenger, the Messiah, to make them the foremost of all people. In what degree their expectation was fulfilled we shall see later on. But it is very remarkable that they should have had such a dream of the future,—for it was the dream not of one ambitious man, but of a whole nation ; and it is a fact, that the wisest, the noblest, and in the best sense the mightiest of all men, was born a Jew, as if to answer this long cherished hope.

The people among whom Jesus lived had no more doubt that the Messiah would come, sooner or later, than we have that the sun will rise to-morrow morning. They had studied every line and letter of their prophets anxiously and earnestly, that they

might miss no hint of the time and manner of his appearing. That the time was near, all agreed ; but there were many opinions as to where and how he would be first seen, and what he would first do.

The Essenes thought he delayed his coming because the people were still so wicked ; and they hoped by leading good lives to hasten his advent. The Pharisees were chiefly anxious so to conduct themselves, that if the Messiah should appear during their lifetime they might have high places in his kingdom. The Sadducees thought that one of the well-known princes of the nation would prove to be the Messiah. But the general belief was that he would live among them unknown and obscure, or even hidden and disguised, till the time came for him to appear openly and proclaim himself. So the people were always thinking, " Perhaps he is already with us ! Perhaps to-morrow, or at the next festival, he will make himself known ! "

When he did come they all expected to be made rich and happy. Jerusalem would become the Capital of the earth, as Rome then was, — only it would be larger and more splendid than Rome, or any city, had been before. There would be no more war and no more suffering, after all the wicked had been punished. The bad people were first to be put out of the way, and then the good were to live in peace and plenty forever. The trees would bear fruit all the year round ; the grapes and the grain would be much larger and finer than before ; wild animals would lose their ferocity, so that the lion and the lamb would dwell together ; there would be no more sickness, but the deaf, the dumb, the blind, and the lame would all be cured at once. The earth was, in fact, to become a perfect paradise ; and over it the Messiah would reign in Jerusalem, giving wise and just and holy laws to all mankind.

Meanwhile what did Jesus think of all this ? Undoubtedly he hoped and prayed for the Messiah as earnestly as any, during his boyhood and youth. But as he grew up, did he form any resolve, or feel any longing, to be the Messiah himself ? We are not told, and cannot certainly say. When the call came he was not surprised, and yet not at once could he fully believe that he had been chosen to fill this holy office.

Probably the feeling grew stronger in his heart that some great future was before him ; and it is not unlikely that the thought sometimes occurred to him, " What if God should summon me to be the Deliverer of my people ? " The event showed that he held none of the foolish and extravagant fancies which had grown up in most minds, but had formed so pure and lofty an ideal of the Messiah's work, that few were able to appreciate it. He must have been thinking for a long while what he would like the Messiah to be and do ; some whispers in his heart must have told him that he himself would be called of God to the sufferings and labors which he saw the Messiah must undertake.

REFERENCES.

Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. i. pp. 314-327 ; Hausrath's "New Testament Times," vol. i. pp. 191-204 ; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chaps. vi., xxii. ; Allen's "Fragments of Christian History," chap. i., "The Messiah and the Christ."

IX.

THE NEW PROPHET.

MATT. iii. 1-12. MARK i. 1-8. LUKE iii. 1-18. JOHN i. 15-28.

WHILE many of the people of Palestine were thus watching and waiting for the Messiah, suddenly the tidings spread abroad over the country, — “There is a Prophet by the Jordan, on the edge of the Wilderness, who says that the Messiah is already with us, and that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

Imagine a company of shipwrecked people on a lonely coast, waiting day after day for a ship to arrive and rescue them. They have kept one of their number on a hill above them to watch the far-off line where sky and water meet, and let them know when the expected sail appears in sight. At last this watchman sounds the joyful cry, “The ship is coming !” How the people run hither and thither ! some climbing to the look-out’s place, others hurrying to the beach, — all anxious to catch the first glimpse of the sails which bring them relief and deliverance.

Such commotion was made in Palestine when, after long waiting, the new Prophet, John the Baptist, sent forth his cry, “Repent ! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” Who was this John the Baptist, whose words made such a sudden stir, and whom the people eagerly crowded together to hear and see ?

He was a man who had lived as a boy in the south of Palestine while Jesus had been growing up in the north. He, too, had felt deeply all the evils of the time. He saw how the people suffered ; how many of them were being led away by sin into deeper suffering ; how the priests, who ought to have been good and wise, were many of them foolish and wicked men ; how the Pharisees and Essenes for the most part only

put on the appearance of religion, and had not much faith or love in their hearts.

Being of a fiery and impetuous nature, the sight of all this grew to be more than John could bear. He had a pleasant home in Hebron, but he could not be content like others simply to wait for the Messiah. He would go off into the wilderness towards the Dead Sea, where at all events he need not see the wrongs that filled his soul with hot indignation, and there he would pray to God, night and day, to teach him how he might help his people.

This wilderness was a dreary and desolate place, where there was little to be seen save rocks and sand. One might walk through it for days and meet no living creature, unless it were now and then a bird, a fox, or a poisonous snake. There was no water, save such as had been left by the rain in the hollows of the rocks, and that supplied by a few tiny springs. There was nothing on which one could support life, except locusts and wild honey. The bees built their nests in clefts among the rocks, and the locusts, a kind of grasshopper, were blown by the south winds from Arabia.

Here in this wilderness John lived entirely alone for many years, subsisting on such fare. He saw no human being, other than criminals who had fled into this solitude to escape the officers of the law ; his only house was a cave ; his only clothing was a coarse garment made of camel's hair, bound at the waist by a leathern girdle ; his only companions were his own thoughts ; his only occupation was to meditate on the words of the Prophets, and to pray God to help his people out of their weakness and sin.

At last, as the result of his thinking and praying, a great purpose began to take possession of his mind. Here in the desert the Roman soldiers were far away, and it did not seem so hopeless to contend with them. Dangers at a distance never seem so great as when we are close to them. People who lived under the shadow of the Roman forts were so fearful of them that they hardly dared hope God would be able to overthrow them ; but to John in the wilderness, what were a

few armed men, that they should hold back the Kingdom of Heaven?

Moreover, had not the Rabbis been saying that the Messiah only delayed his coming because of the sins of the people? Had they not said that if for one day only the whole nation should truly repent, that day the Messiah would appear and establish his kingdom? The people *should* repent and turn from their wickedness. He, John, would make them. While others were only waiting and wishing, he would *do* something. John never for one instant supposed that he was the Messiah; but that great King must be only waiting, he thought, for the people to purify themselves for his coming, — and John heard a voice in his own heart bidding him go forth and say to all, “Repent! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

So he left his cave and his solitude, and went out to the banks of the Jordan. Here he preached to those whom he found; and they, being convinced that he was a true Prophet, with a new word of God to speak to them, told others what they had heard. These others, in turn, spread the story more widely abroad, until the fame of the new Prophet reached Jerusalem, and the people began to stream out in crowds to hear for themselves. Even into distant Galilee and quiet Nazareth came tidings of John’s preaching, and of the multitudes that were gathering about him.

Jesus had now become a man thirty years old, or perhaps somewhat more. He heard of the wonderful Prophet who was making many disciples; and leaving his home and his quiet life, never to return to Nazareth again except for a brief visit, he journeyed to the distant south where John was preaching. Was there any whisper in his heart, as he set forth on this journey, whither it would lead him? Did any shadow of coming trial rest upon his spirit as he took leave of the happy scenes of his childhood? We may well think so; and that, mingled with such hope and joy as the report of John’s words had awakened in his heart, there was a trace of deep sadness, as if the approaching day, which was to bring to others so much happiness, would bring to him suffering and untimely death.

To the banks of the Jordan, then, near where that river empties into the Dead Sea, a stranger amidst the multitudes of people gathering there from every direction, came Jesus from his northern home. What manner of man was he, whose fame had drawn Jesus thither? What was the scene Jesus looked upon as he joined the company gathered in the open air to listen to John's preaching? He saw before him a tall, strong, wild-looking figure, with long hair flowing down over his shoulders, with bare arms, and glowing eyes, who with impassioned gestures was pouring a torrent of burning words into the ears of the listening people: "I am a voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord! for after me cometh one who is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen. He is already standing among you. His fan is in his hand; and as the laborer driveth the chaff from the wheat, so will he purge the wicked from the land. Repent, therefore! cease quickly from your evil works and learn to do good, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

John's glance fell upon a group of Pharisees and Sadducees among the throng, and stretching his arm toward them he said sternly, "Ye brood of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? What if you are children of Abraham and heirs of the promise made to him? God will not save you unless you bring forth works of repentance, for out of these stones God can raise up children of Abraham, to inherit the promises." Such were the words he spoke; while again and again during his discourse he sent forth the warning cry, "Repent! repent! and be baptized."

Then some of his hearers, moved by what they had heard, would leave their places, and going up to John would say that they wished to confess their faults and become his disciples. These went down with him into the River Jordan, and there he baptized them. By this simple and impressive ceremony they expressed their desire to be cleansed from all the evil that had been in their hearts, and their purpose to lead afterward pure and holy lives.

What a scene it must have been! the swiftly flowing river,

the thousands gathered in hushed stillness upon its banks, the Prophet and his converts standing in the stream,— he talking to them earnestly, and they showing through the repentant tears that filled their eyes the light of a new joy and peace ! A band of disciples stood upon the edge of the river, waiting to receive those coming up out of the water, and reverently regarded their master, whom some thought might be himself the promised Messiah. Yet all this scene would long ago have faded from the memory of mankind, but for the fact that Jesus was there looking on, and afterward himself went down into the water to be baptized. That great event we must leave for another chapter.

REFERENCES.

Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. pp. 201-266; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. 104-114 ; Hausrath's "New Testament Times," vol. ii. pp. 93-112 ; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chaps. xxiii. xxiv. xxv. ; "Bible for young People," vol. v. chap. vii.

X.

THE MESSIAH MADE KNOWN.

MATT. iii. 13-17. MARK i. 9-11. LUKE iii. 21-22. JOHN i. 31-34.

WE have come to an event in the life of Jesus which, like the first stopping-place on a journey, marks the completion of one part of it ; but before we describe it we must stop a moment, to consider how we shall set to work. There are four Gospels in our New Testament. Three of these tell the story of the Baptism of Jesus, each in its own way and differently from the others; the fourth does not tell it at all. In the first place, how shall we account for the fact that they do not agree? In the next place, how shall we make up our minds in what way the story ought to be told?

In answer to the first question, we must remember that no Life of Jesus was written till some years after he was dead. For a long time his disciples expected him to come back from heaven, and be with them on the earth. It was not to them as if he were really dead, but only as if he had gone on a journey ; and as he was expected to return, they did not feel the need of writing down the history of his life. Whenever the apostles preached, they told about Jesus, and many stories of what he had done and said were treasured up in the memory of the Christians. Very likely some stories not true were told about him, as there have been about every great man ; and all that was remembered of his life, being told over and over again, would become more or less changed. If any of us tell a story of what has happened, and it passes round among our friends, we find after a while that without the least desire to deceive, and simply because

each one tells it in a little different language, the story gets somewhat changed.

So it was with the story of the life of Jesus, during the years before it had been committed to writing. When at last the Christians concluded that their Master would not come back to earth again, they wanted to have all that was known about him clearly written out. But, meantime, most if not all the men who were with Jesus during his ministry had died. Though three of our Gospels bear the names of Apostles, they were probably written by some of their followers after the Apostles themselves were dead. Turn to the beginning of the first Gospel, and we read, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew," — which undoubtedly means, "The life of Jesus as Matthew told it in his preaching." First, the Apostles remembered what they could ; then after them the people to whom they had preached remembered, as they were able, what had been told to them : this is what was finally written down. It is not strange, then, that many of the incidents are told in different ways by the different writers.

How, then, shall we decide just what actually did occur, when we find that the Gospels do not agree ? The best we can do is to put the accounts together, and say how we think it must have been. If several of your friends were to bring you conflicting descriptions of the same thing, and you could not go to look at it yourself, you would say that probably none of them remembered it just as it was, and would try to make up your mind from their imperfect accounts how the thing would appear to you, if you could see it with your own eyes. Of course we cannot be perfectly sure that we are right in such a case, but only that we have come somewhere near the truth ; and we must not think other people necessarily wrong if they have another opinion about it.

And now let us try to get some idea of that great event, — the Baptism of Jesus, — as we may suppose it was known to his first disciples.

John had been for some time preaching and baptizing on the banks of the Jordan, and always those keen, piercing eyes of

his were looking out from underneath his bushy eyebrows, searching the faces that thronged about him, to see if in any of them he could behold the features of the promised Messiah. "The time must be drawing very near now," John doubtless thought. "The Messiah is only waiting till the whole nation shall repent. Have they not repented? Thousands upon thousands have come to me confessing their sins, and have gone home to lead better lives. Surely the time of his coming must be close at hand." Every day as John stood up to preach before the people, his first thought may have been, "I wonder if *he* is among them!" Some day not far distant, he was sure, the great king and deliverer of his people would appear, for God would make him known when the time had fully come.

One day, after the preaching, John saw a young man approaching him who at once fixed his attention. There was something in his face which made John's heart leap for joy. "Can this be he?" And as the young man came nearer, a great voice seemed to be saying in his ear, "The Messiah! *This is God's anointed!*" The young man was Jesus. As he had listened to the powerful words of the Prophet, his soul had been stirred as never before. When he arose to walk towards John it was as if an angel were leading him. He knew not clearly what was to take place; but louder than ever he heard that call in his heart, summoning him to the holy and heroic work God had prepared for him.

Like two messengers sent from distant cities to meet at a certain place, who have never seen each other's face, and who yet know each other at once among all the people coming and going, by the look of expectancy each sees in the other's eyes, — so John and Jesus met, and knew that God had appointed their meeting. What a moment that must have been for both of them, as they first stood face to face! Jesus felt that he had found the man who would tell him the meaning of those strange whisperings in his heart which he had heard even from his childhood. This was the messenger from God, who had come with a message specially addressed to him. The eager look in

the face of Jesus, as if he expected a divine revelation were about to be made to him, may have been what led John to think, "Here is the Messiah !" And what emotions must have swelled in John's heart, as he thought that he was looking upon the greatest man in the whole life of the world, — the man who, more than any king or emperor, should be the world's teacher and guide !

Without a word, Jesus went down into the water to be baptized like the rest. But John, after his long waiting and watching, beholding in Jesus the one whom he believed God had sent to be the Messiah, felt that he had no right to treat him like one of his disciples. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ?" John said. But Jesus answered quietly, "Suffer it to be so, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," — meaning doubtless that it was right for him to give the same sign which others gave, that he promised to be true to all God's requirements. Then John baptized him; and as Jesus came up out of the water and knelt down to pray, John declared to some who were standing near him, "This is he of whom I said, that after me should come one mightier than I. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit as I baptize with water." Afterward John said to his disciples that when he looked upon Jesus he knew him to be the Messiah, as quickly and clearly as if a dove from heaven had alighted upon his head, or a voice from the clouds had proclaimed him to be the beloved Son of God. So in after times it came to be written down that a dove lighted upon Jesus, and a voice spoke. But it is more wonderful to think, what is also made plain in the Gospel account (Matt. iii. 14), that John knew Jesus to be the Messiah immediately, though there was no outward sign. We must believe that God did really speak to John's heart, though no one else heard the voice from Heaven.

Thus the Messiah was made known, and one man at least was sure that the long-promised Deliverer had come. The first part of the story is ended. How the Messiah was received, and what he did, — this is the touching and beautiful part of the narrative remaining to be told.

But after this it is not Jesus simply with whom we have to do. It is Jesus the Messiah ; or, using the Greek word *Christ* instead of Messiah, henceforth our story is that of the life of Jesus Christ.

REFERENCES.

Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. i. pp. 408-415 ; Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. pp. 266-300 ; "Bible for Young People," vol. v. chap. viii. ; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. pp. 114-118.

PART SECOND.

1.

THE CONFLICT IN THE WILDERNESS.

MATT. iv. 1-11. MARK i. 12-13. LUKE iv. 1-13.

It is not probable that John told many people that the Messiah had been made known to him. It was his part to wait for the Messiah to declare himself publicly, when and where he pleased. He may have told a few, but the knowledge of what had occurred at the Baptism did not spread far.

Immediately afterward Jesus disappeared. John would not wonder at this. He doubtless expected to hear soon that Jesus had begun his work, perhaps in Jerusalem ; and meanwhile it was his duty to go on as before, preaching to the people, till he should receive the Messiah's orders.

But where had Jesus gone? He went into the Wilderness, from which John a little time before had come out, — for there were many things to be settled in his mind, and he had great need to be alone. In a moment, as by a flash of lightning, it had been clearly revealed to him that he was the Messiah, chosen of God; and his heart had answered, "I will do as God wills," — but this had happened under great excitement, and now he must stop and think.

In time of war, the General may wish to send a messenger through the enemy's country, where if he should be caught he would be instantly killed. He thinks carefully who is his bravest and most skilful soldier, and then intrusts to that man

the service to be performed. The soldier is for the moment pleased with his General's notice and confidence. His heart swells with pride at thought of the glory to be won, and he says at once, "I will go." But when he goes back to his tent to prepare for the journey, these great emotions no longer sustain him; then the dangers he must face rise up before him, and he begins to ask himself, "Can I perform the hard task assigned to me? Was I not rash to promise it?"

Jesus had received such a call to a work of great difficulty and peril, and when he went into the wilderness to think it all over, he had a sharp conflict with himself to undergo.

To be the Messiah!—could he be sure that he had the strength and wisdom, or that God would give him the ability to carry through so great an undertaking? The way before him was full of danger and uncertainty; the people were fickle, — they might follow him for a time, then all at once turn against him and put him to death before he had accomplished anything. He was one man, alone and unknown, — how could he hope to become the world's teacher and leader? If he were to go out and say to men, "I am the Messiah," what then? Should he do what the people would expect of him, — put himself at the head of a splendid army and fight against the Romans? Or ought he simply to go among the people teaching them about God and how to do right?

Day and night these questions were in his mind as he wandered about in the Wilderness: "Am I perfectly sure that God means me to be the Messiah? And in what way shall I undertake the Messiah's work?" There was little to eat in that lonely place, but for a long time he was so busy with his thoughts that he scarcely felt the need of food; besides, even if he should starve there by himself, how could he return to mingle again with men, till these questions were settled in his own mind?

We all know that when conscience tells us we ought to do that which is difficult or distasteful, something says in our hearts, "Why should you? Better do as you want to, and let the right go."

So when Jesus said to himself that God had called him, to be the Messiah, a voice kept whispering, "Are you certain about it? Is it not foolish to think that you, a carpenter's son, have been selected for so high and holy an office? Will you not fail if you try to do this great work?" All these thoughts Jesus had to put down, though it was only by a hard struggle that he triumphed over them.

The story in the Gospels preserves for us a little fragment of this conflict, which it is said lasted forty days and nights. Jesus became after a time faint and hungry, but he did not stop to look for food. Even in his troubled dreams he was still trying to decide these questions. All the Prophets had said that the Messiah would be able to do the most wonderful things by means of the power God should give him, and the thought came into his mind, "Why should I not command these stones to be made bread? If I can do that, I shall know that I am in truth the Messiah." But then he quickly put the thought aside, for he remembered it was said in the Scriptures, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. viii. 3). It was by the word of God in his heart that he must decide upon his duty. Strange things were done by men who were not good and pure. If he was the Messiah, he must prove it to himself not by working miracles, but by conquering all inward evil and weakness.

Another time, when perhaps he was worn out with loss of rest and food, so that he sank into a kind of waking sleep, he seemed to be standing on the lofty roof of the Temple in Jerusalem, where it overhung a steep precipice, and to be looking down into the deep valley hundreds of feet below. Still this question pursued him, "Can I be sure that God means me to be the Messiah?" The thought came to him, "If I am he, would not God keep me from falling, were I to cast myself over this giddy height?" (Ps. xci. 11, 12.) Then he remembered again that it was said in the Scriptures, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. vi. 16). It was not right, he saw, to run foolishly into danger and expect God to

rescue him ; and he must not try to decide the question in that manner.

At last he imagined himself on the top of a high mountain, like the hill behind his village home in Nazareth, with the wide country spread out before him. Something whispered in his heart, "If you will be a little selfish and cruel like other men, you can use your power as the Messiah to make yourself king over all this land." Then he said, "This is an evil thought. Get thee hence, Satan ! I must worship and serve God in all things, as it is written (Deut. vi. 13.) and I will not try to do God's work in any other than the noblest way."

This ended the contest ; all his doubts and dark thoughts fled away. For many weary days it had been as if he were fighting with evil spirits ; but now they all departed, and "Angels came and ministered unto him." What a beautiful expression that is, to indicate the peace and content that come to us all when we have gained the victory over what is weak or wrong ! Perhaps, unseen to us, angels are about us at such moments ; and perhaps in real truth Jesus saw them, when his fight with temptation was ended. At all events, rest came to his tired heart, as if angels had brought it direct from heaven.

This conflict in the Wilderness is usually called Christ's temptation ; though you will notice that none of the thoughts with which he then contended were what we should call wicked, — they were rather thoughts of weakness. Jesus knew in his heart all the time that he was not mistaken about the call of God which had come to him ; but still it was hard for him to bring his whole mind to realize and accept the great change in his life which had so quickly taken place.

At the beginning of this which we may call the second part of his history, we see that after a sharp conflict with himself Jesus fully determined that he was the Messiah, and that he would try to lead the people out of their ignorance and wretchedness and sin. The way was not altogether bright before him, and already he saw that it might soon lead him to death ; but from this time he went forward, never hesitating or doubt-

ing for an instant, — never troubled by the least return of those fears and uncertainties which had beset him in the Wilderness like a troop of evil spirits. Henceforth, notwithstanding all his sorrows, his life was cheerful, trustful, one might even say for the most part bright and happy.

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Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. pp. 300-329; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chap. ix.; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. i. chap. xxvii.

II.

JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE.

MATT. iv. 12-25. MARK i. 14-22. LUKE iv. 14-15. JOHN i. 29-51.

THE Gospel of John does not speak of the conflict in the Wilderness, but relates some incidents which we may suppose to have occurred when Jesus returned to the banks of the Jordan.

During the time when the account of Christ's life existed only in the memory of his disciples, and before it was written down, many incidents became misplaced. They are now like the pieces of a dissected map mixed up in a box ; and as some of the pieces are entirely lost, we cannot be perfectly sure of finding the right place for all that are left.

It is probable, however, that Jesus first went back to the scene of his baptism when he came out of the Wilderness. Here John again recognized him as the Messiah, before some of his friends. They, however, made no haste to leave John and follow Jesus. Others before this had claimed to be the Messiah, and had miserably failed to accomplish anything. The people did not wish to be deceived again, and most of them were disposed to wait for some proof that Jesus was the real Messiah.


Some of John's disciples, however, were not so slow to feel the power of the new leader. Two young men to whom John had pointed him out, followed him, as he walked along by the river. Jesus turned and asked, "What seek ye?" They, perhaps not knowing just what to say, replied, "Master, where dwellest thou?" The Master said pleasantly, "Come and see." So they went with him, and as they became acquainted were quickly convinced that here was one greater than John. There

was nothing wild or exciting in the appearance of Jesus, and strangers did not at once see that he was different from other men. But those who came close to him found a charm in his speech and manner which soon won their reverence and love.

After a few days Jesus had a little band of disciples about him, and with these he set out for his home in Galilee. Already he had decided that as the Messiah he could not have anything to do with armies, as most of the people expected, but must teach his countrymen by word and example the purest and noblest way of living. Naturally, therefore, he went to begin his work where he was best acquainted with the people, and felt surest of making them understand what he wished to teach.

But now a thing happened which made no little commotion through the land, the news of which may have reached Jesus before he arrived at his journey's end. John was suddenly arrested and thrown into prison. Not because he had done anything wrong, but simply because the Roman governor had become afraid of him. Herod Antipas thought John might use his power with the people to stir up a rebellion; so he sent a troop of soldiers, who soon had him fast locked in a dungeon. The great Prophet was in the power of the Romans, and was soon to be put to death. What better fate could Jesus expect, when he should become famous as a leader of the people? Still this new illustration of the dangers before him did not hold him back; he was all the more anxious to begin his work, since with John in prison there was no other to whom the people could look as a guide.

The place in which Jesus first preached was as different from the scene of John's labors as he himself was, in person, from that fierce and fiery Prophet. John shouted and stormed; Jesus was quiet and gentle in his ways. John was gloomy and lived much by himself; Jesus was of bright and cheerful disposition and loved society. John preached upon the edge of the Wilderness where Nature was dreary; Jesus went at once to the beautiful spot in all Palestine.



Imagine a lake, some thirteen miles long and six broad, whose waters are wonderfully blue and clear. The boatman, leaning over his boat's side, can see the pebbles on the bottom and the fish swimming underneath him, at a great depth below. This is the Sea of Galilee. On the eastern side there are mountains rocky and desolate ; but the western shore is a succession of low hills, which when Jesus looked upon them were all covered with green vineyards, stately trees, and white villages. The lake lies in a deep hollow, five hundred feet lower than the surface of the Mediterranean Sea, and this makes it very warm. Its shores are almost unvisited by winter, and summer reigns there nearly the whole year through.

In the time of Christ it was one great garden, producing the most luscious fruits in abundance. All along, houses and villages were thickly clustered, half hidden in the luxuriant foliage, and birds of brilliant plumage mingled their songs with the sounds of busy life that filled the air. The lake too was covered with life ; for hundreds and even thousands of boats were plying their way hither and thither, some carrying passengers and merchandise, and some filled with men engaged in catching the fish with which the waters of the lake were filled.

This western shore was for some time the scene of Christ's labors. Dividing the coast into two halves, the principal place on the southern part of the lake was Tiberias. Here was the Palace of Herod Antipas, a beautiful marble structure, to be seen from afar, up and down the coast. On the northern half of the lake, the largest place was Capernaum, where Jesus for a time made his home. This was a large village of some importance, because the great Caravan road from Damascus to the Sea ran through it. There were no railroads or even wagons in those days, and goods were carried across the country on the backs of camels and donkeys, long lines of which, slowly pacing along, passed through Capernaum. This place was on the border of Galilee, and government officers were stationed there to collect taxes on the merchandise which the caravans brought into the country.

It was in Capernaum that Jesus began to preach, and the people soon flocked to hear him. He did not at once say openly and to everybody that he was the Messiah, but seemed rather to wish them to find that out for themselves from what he said and did. It is not probable that Jesus ever expected to see himself acknowledged as the Messiah by the whole nation. He knew that for a long while only a few would understand him, or fully believe in him; and he wished to teach these few so well, that they could carry on his work if he were suddenly taken away.

He was like one with a bag of precious seed, who finds that not many will allow him to sow it in their gardens. He therefore plants it carefully and tends it faithfully in a few places, so that the tree or shrub which springs from it may get a good start, and furnish seed after he is gone, as people more and more learn its use.

Jesus wished to gather about him a company of intimate friends and disciples whom he could teach more carefully than was possible through his public preaching. He observed those whom he thought might be fit to join this company, and so clearly did he perceive the thoughts of others that he knew when they were prepared to devote their lives to helping him in his labors. Walking by the shore of the lake he saw some fishermen engaged in their work. Doubtless he had before noticed them among his listeners, and now when he said "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," they at once left their boats and their nets and went with him.

But though Jesus was specially devoted to those whom he thus called to be his disciples, he preached constantly to all who came to hear him. Not only did his eloquence attract the people, but he had a wonderful gift of healing the sick, which quickly extended his fame. From far and near they came to listen to the new preacher, and be healed of their diseases. Throughout all Galilee and as far as to Jerusalem, tidings spread abroad about the prophet whom all were eager to hear and see. Jesus of Nazareth, who entered Capernaum with only a few friends, an entire stranger to all the people of the

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place, had not lived there many months before his name was on everybody's lips, and crowds attended him wherever he moved.

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III.

THE SERMON AT NAZARETH.

LUKE iv. 16-30.

AFTER a time, Jesus began to make journeys to other places in Galilee. Strangers who came from distant cities and villages desired him to come and preach to them at home, where their friends could hear him also; and he was very willing to grant their request. Wherever he went, a multitude gathered to listen to him; and after the preaching, sick people thronged about him to be cured.

Going about from one village to another, he came at last to Nazareth, where he had grown up. We can imagine what curiosity to hear him there must have been in that place of all others. Everybody remembered him, it was so short a time since he had gone away. And now he had suddenly become great and famous, — a credit and a source of honor to the little town in which he had lived so long as a quiet, humble citizen.

Nazareth had now a Prophet of its own. Its inhabitants felt a new pride in themselves, as if they had given him to the world; and they surely expected to have the first place in his regard. If he had done wonderful works elsewhere, how much more would he delight to astonish the friends of his youth by the use of his great powers. In short, they undoubtedly felt as if Jesus belonged to them more than to other people, and thought he would make a special effort to please them.

Probably Jesus learned something of their feeling as soon as he entered the place. Very likely they crowded round him with offensive familiarity. People who had scarcely noticed him in former days now came forward with warm words of welcome. Old friends greeted him in the old way, not appearing to recognize the great change that had taken place since he was last among them.

Now, if Jesus had been like any ordinary man suddenly made rich or notorious, this would have been well enough. But he did not so regard himself. He was God's appointed Messiah, and he looked upon those great gifts of teaching and healing of which he suddenly found himself possessed, and which he did not doubt God had specially bestowed upon him, with as much awe and reverence as if they had been given to some one else.

If you had received from a very dear friend and benefactor some precious and sacred gift, — a gift so rare and valuable that you hardly dared take it out of its case to look at it, and which you never thought of in other than a tender and solemn way, — how would you feel to have your playmates crowd around you, crying out, "Let us see it!" manifesting no more respect for it than if it were a cheap, common toy? For himself, Jesus cared nothing. But he cared a great deal for the gifts of God which he held in keeping, — too much to show them for the gratification of a vulgar curiosity.

Moreover, though the place was dear to him, the people of Nazareth had no special claim upon him. It was not his business to reflect credit upon this or any town, but in all places alike to attend to the work God had given him. Before the service in the Synagogue, Jesus must have had ample proof that the people of the village did not feel the sacredness of his mission, but were chiefly intent upon making a show of him for their own benefit.

The usual hour for Sabbath service arrived, and the little Synagogue was full to overflowing, for Jesus was to preach. After the opening prayers and the reading from the Law, Jesus stood up to read the lesson from the Prophets. Certain portions of the Scriptures were appointed to be read each Sabbath, and the lesson for this day was singularly appropriate. It was from the Book of Isaiah; and when Jesus had found the place, he began where it says, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor" (Isaiah lxi). When he had finished the reading he sat down to deliver his sermon, for such was the custom of those days.

First of all he began to say to them that the scripture he had read was fulfilled in him. He had come "to preach good tidings to the meek," "to bind up the broken-hearted," "to comfort all that mourn," "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This was the text from which he drew his discourse; and as he went on, to speak perhaps of that better future when all should obey God's will, and love should rule in all hearts, his audience was delighted and charmed with his "gracious words." "Is not this Joseph's son?" they whispered to each other. "Who would have thought that one who has lived among us so long, a mere carpenter, could speak like this!"

But after Jesus had talked for a little while on this theme, he took up another matter about which he could not remain silent. He was not there simply to please them, but to do them good, — to show them how they could reach that better future of which he had spoken. It was his duty to make them see, if possible, wherein their lives were wrong, and what were the nobler ways of thinking and acting. Again, we must remember that while such assumption of superior wisdom sounded rather overbearing to his former acquaintances, Jesus felt that it was not he himself, but rather God through him, who was teaching the people.

"You will remind me of the old proverb," he said, "'Physician, heal thyself.' Begin your work at home. Do here what you have done elsewhere. Let the glory of your works be here seen, and the fame of them go abroad from this place, which has the first claim upon you." All this was in the minds of the people, and Jesus answered their thought, more in sorrow than in anger, by telling them that it could not be so. They did not honor his mission in their hearts as they ought to honor the work of God. They were thinking too much of the renown which he as a Prophet might confer upon their village. He quoted to them the saying, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country," and tried to show them that so long as they cared more to lift themselves up into new importance than to increase God's kingdom upon earth, it was useless for him to try to work among them.

His words were, no doubt, somewhat stern, and his hearers began to take offence. "He scorns us, then," they said to themselves. "He will not be our prophet; does not think us good enough; and none of his great works are to be performed for our benefit." Jesus must have noticed the scowls gathering on their brows; but he was not afraid of them, and continued his discourse. He reminded them that the Prophet Elijah, when his life was threatened by his own countrymen, was directed by God to the house of a poor widow in the strange country of Sidon (1 Kings xvii. 8); that Elisha had used his God-given power, not to heal the proud Israelites, but to cure a Syrian soldier (2 Kings v.).

The hot-blooded Nazarenes thought these words were spoken to indicate contempt for them. Jesus meant that those who came to him ignorant and suffering had the highest claim upon him, and that he could regard neither threats nor worldly distinctions of place and rank. They, in their anger, heard only that he would do nothing to please them, and looked upon them as of less account than a widow of Sidon or a Syrian leper.

This was more than they could bear. A carpenter's son, whom they had for years looked down upon, to treat them with such lofty scorn! In their blind rage they forgot the first part of the sermon which had shown such marvellous eloquence. The assembly became a furious mob. They rose with shouts and howls, dragged him out of the Synagogue, out of the village, and up to the top of the hill above, which Jesus knew so well, bent upon killing him by throwing him over the precipice of rocks.

Perhaps their anger had somewhat cooled by the time they reached the top, for in such minds a blaze of temper dies down as quickly as it is kindled. Probably they were awed also by his coolness and fearlessness, for he did not beg for his life or show the least alarm. At all events, when they arrived at the summit of the hill they released their hold of him, and he quietly walked away.

This seems to have been the last time that Jesus went back to

the scenes of his boyhood ; and it may have been on this occasion that his family left Nazareth also, and went to live with him in Capernaum.

In this incident we see that the dangers which Jesus expected had already begun to gather about him ; and we have an illustration of the steady determination and courage with which he met them all, even to the last bitter end.

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IV.

HEALING THE SICK.

MATT. viii., ix. MARK i., ii. LUKE iv., v.

RETURNING from Nazareth, Jesus went back to Capernaum again. We cannot give anything like a daily record of his life there, for only some fragments of the account of it have come down to us. It is like far-away music, of which only now and then a strain is brought to our ears by the breeze, while of the rest we hear nothing. For many days Jesus taught and labored there by the Lake, and we have to make what picture of his life we can from the few incidents told by the writers of the Gospels.

We must remember that as yet only a few thought of him as the Messiah. Many came to hear him preach, and see his great works of healing. But, after all, they felt the charm of his words without very clearly understanding them, and he was not the kind of Messiah whom they were looking for. Although the multitude followed him wherever he went, he did not feel elated as if he had already achieved success. We shall see something of his skill and power, and also some of the difficulties in his way, by taking up a few of the events of his work in Capernaum.

One Sabbath day he was speaking to a large congregation in the Synagogue, when suddenly a crazy man arose and began to shout in a wild and furious way. In times of great religious excitement there are always some who lose their reason. In our hospitals to-day there are many patients insane upon religious subjects ; for religious emotions when fully aroused are very strong, and, like the passion of anger, easily overthrow the weak will and judgment. The fact that this man was taken with a fit of raving while Jesus was speaking shows how deeply the feelings of the audience had been touched.

In those times little was known about insanity. It was commonly thought that evil spirits entered into people and made them talk in such strange and senseless fashion. Insane persons themselves often had this delusion, as would naturally be the case if they had before shared the common belief in, and fear of, possession by evil spirits. So when the excitement of the occasion brought on this man a fit of madness, he began to cry out as if he had been an evil spirit, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth! Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, thou Holy One of God."

It is not probable that Jesus believed there was a devil inside the man. But other men were to him like children, and he had to talk to them as if they were children, in language which they could understand.

If he had merely told the insane man to be quiet, very likely it would have had no effect. But, fixing his eye upon him, Jesus said in a commanding voice, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him!" That command reached the root of the man's delusion, and at once his raving ceased. Here we see again, as at Nazareth, how completely Jesus was master of the situation, and how in any sort of tumult he knew exactly what to do and say. As a good sailor knows instinctively how to act when a sudden squall strikes his sail, so in those stormy scenes through which Jesus moved he never lost his presence of mind, and always did the right thing, even without stopping to think. We see also what power he had to command the feelings and passions of others who were not able to control themselves, — a power like that which the lion-tamer possesses, to make fierce beasts obey him.

The Gospels relate many stories which show that Jesus could cure bodily as well as mental diseases. We know that the state of the mind has much to do with bodily health. People are often made ill by grief or anxiety, and are sometimes able to throw off sickness by a strong determination to get well. Jesus had such wonderful command over the minds of others, that he could, to some extent, reach their physical troubles and weaknesses also. As we read the accounts of his works of healing, it

seems to us that many of the stories must have been changed, as they were told over and over, before being written down. But we cannot tell how far such power as Jesus possessed might be used to cure disease; and therefore, while we may have various beliefs about them, we do not know just how accurately these stories represent what Jesus did. We may be sure, however, that his power of healing was so great as to convince him that it was God's special gift to the appointed Messiah. We may be sure, also, that his works of this kind were so marvellous as quickly to spread his fame through the whole land.

In one case Jesus is said to have healed a man of leprosy, a slow but terrible, and nearly always fatal disease peculiar to Eastern countries. It may seem a little strange that after this cure Jesus charged the man to go his way and tell nobody what had been done to him. But we must remember that he considered himself first of all a teacher of the truth. He was beginning to be afraid that, as the fame of these cures spread, sick people would come to him in such numbers that he would have no time to teach the strong and well. He did not want them to become so intent upon getting their physical troubles removed, that they would forget his words of wisdom and the sins which he wished to correct by his teaching.

Once, here in Capernaum, he was teaching in a private house. All the doors and windows were blocked up with listeners, and people surrounded the house outside to catch some few words of what Jesus was saying. Four men came bearing a cot, on which was stretched a man sick with the palsy. They could not get into the house, so great was the throng, and probably they were afraid to wait till Jesus came out, lest among the many claimants for his notice they might not be able to attract his attention. So they succeeded in making their way to the outside stairway that led up to the top of the house, and having carried their burden up thither, they began to remove the flat and loosely made roof. When they had made a sufficiently large hole, they let the sick man down with cords into the very room where Jesus was sitting.

However much annoyed he might have been by this rude interruption of his discourse, Jesus must have been touched by the faith in him which the sick man and his friends manifested in taking all this trouble. So, as he looked upon the helpless form before him turning toward him eyes full of appeal for help, Jesus said to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Why did Jesus say that? Because all the Jews thought that sickness was God's punishment for breaking the religious law. Probably this man thought that he had not said his prayers as often as he ought, or in some such way had offended God, and that therefore God had sent the palsy upon him. Jesus knew that no other saying would so quickly give the man comfort and courage as to tell him that his sins were forgiven. We need not suppose that Jesus agreed with him about the cause of his sickness, but knowing how the man felt, he naturally used the words which would convey to him most sympathy and hope.

But these words at once stirred up hard thoughts in the minds of some of the people present. "What! a man assume to forgive sins? God alone could do that. Was it not wicked thus to take upon one's lips words which God alone should speak?" Jesus saw their look of horror at what he had said, and noted them whispering to each other. But instead of taking back what he had said, he saw his opportunity to teach them a lesson. He himself believed that it was the power of God by which he spoke and effected his cures, and he always desired to make others believe that his teachings were such as God had put into his heart. Here was a chance to impress upon these people that a mightier than himself was addressing them through his voice. So when he beheld them accusing him of blasphemy in their hearts, he said, "You shall see that I can speak in the name of God, and that I am directed by Him in what I do and say." Turning to the sick man, he commanded him, "Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine own house." To the amazement of all, he did arise, picked up his cot, and walked out of the room.

How quick Jesus was to seize the occasion, not only to do good, but to enforce a lesson upon those about him! How quick,



too, were those whom he wished to teach, and whose lives he would have brightened and helped, to take offence at his sayings! Their ideas were narrow. Their minds were full of prejudice. They thought all goodness consisted in observing the rules of conduct which the Rabbis had given them, though all the while their hearts might be full of hatred and injustice. Jesus came to them great and noble of heart, and because his goodness so far exceeded their little rules, they kept accusing him of evil. They were honest enough, but very foolish and blind.

Owls and bats, which fly at night, and whose eyes are not made to bear much light, doubtless think it very cruel and wrong of the sun to shine so brightly; so the darkened souls, which cannot see much truth, commonly love their ignorance best, and are apt to be offended if one tries to show them what the truth really is.

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V.

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES.

MATT. ix. 9-38. MARK ii. 14-28; iii. 1-6. LUKE v. 27-30;
vi. 1-11.

WE have seen that when Jesus spoke of forgiving sins, certain people accused him of blasphemy, — a crime which the Jewish Law punished with death. These people were Scribes and Pharisees; and if you remember what has been already said of them, you will understand why they were certain to be displeased with Jesus. There are people who think it very wrong to drive on Sunday, and who would be shocked if you should propose such a thing. So the Pharisees were continually being shocked because Jesus did not pay attention to all their absurd notions of right and wrong. Let us look at some of the foolish charges they made against him, and see how he met them.

Here in Capernaum, where Jesus made his home, there were many government officials called "publicans," whose business it was to collect taxes on the merchandise passing through by the caravan road. Many of them were wicked and cruel men, no better than robbers, who used their power to get money out of the people for themselves. But others, again, were no doubt honest, upright men, who simply did their duty under the law. The Jews, however, hated the whole class, because they served under the Romans, and held them all, good and bad alike, to be the worst of sinners. If one of their own nation became a publican, the Pharisees would not allow him in their synagogues or their houses; they would have no dealings with him, nor even speak with him if they could help it; above all, they would not eat with him, for this made them, as they said, "unclean."

The Pharisees were like a person who wears a very white dress, and who hardly dares either stand or walk or sit, for fear that the dress may get soiled. Their great horror was lest they should sully the purity of their souls, either by doing some forbidden thing, or by coming too close to others who were sinners; in which case they would have to pay money to the priests, and go through certain ceremonies to make themselves "clean." To eat with a publican was therefore, to the Pharisee, about as bad as being a publican. Jesus, however, had no such feeling toward this despised and hated class. If they were honest men, they were as good as anybody in his regard. If they were bad men, he wished, not to avoid, but to help them.

One day, as he was walking through the streets of the town, he saw a publican named Matthew (or Levi) "sitting at the receipt of customs." Jesus must have known something about him before, probably had observed and liked him while he was teaching, and now determined to have Matthew for one of his disciples. So he said to him, as he had to others, "Follow me!" and Matthew, understanding what the call meant, at once left his business to obey it. Without doubt he felt that a great honor had been conferred upon him,—much as one of the despised negro race would have felt in the old days of slavery if he had been invited to a social gathering of white people.

But Matthew was not poor. He had a house, and plenty of friends of his own class. In order that they might have an opportunity to meet and talk with the great Teacher, he asked Jesus to go home with him to dinner, and invited some of his acquaintances also. Jesus went, as a matter of course. He would go anywhere, if only there was a chance to do good.

But it became noised abroad that Jesus had gone to Matthew's house and was eating there with "publicans and sinners." The Pharisees were greatly scandalized. A man set himself up for a Rabbi, and visit a publican! They had never heard of such a thing. It sounded to them as it would sound to us if we heard that a minister had allowed himself to be drawn into low company.

Some of Jesus' disciples seem to have been about the place, — and to them the Pharisees addressed themselves. "Are not you ashamed of your Master to have him sitting in there with publicans?" The disciples probably replied with spirit, so that a dispute arose which reached the ears of Jesus. He was quick to perceive what was going on about him, and understood at once what the trouble was.

Coming to the door, we may suppose, he answered the Pharisees himself. "You say that these men who have made me their guest are sinners; where, then, should I be if not among those who need to be saved from sin? What would you think of a physician who visited only healthy people, and refused to go into a sick-room because he might catch the disease?"

They had no answer to make to that question, so they brought forward a new complaint. "Your disciples are not religious," they said. "They do not fast and make frequent prayers, like John's disciples, much less like the Pharisees." To this Jesus replied, "Why should they make themselves miserable by going without food? This is their season of gladness while I am with them. I am as a bridegroom among his friends, and in my presence they are full of joy." Then he added, with a touch of sadness, "They will be sorrowful enough when I am gone away."

Moreover, he went on to tell them, by means of an illustration, that he should no more think of making his disciples conform to all the old religious customs, than of putting a patch of new cloth upon a worn-out garment. His religion was to be a new one, — somewhat like the old, to be sure, but no mere patching up of Phariseism.

The Pharisees went away silenced, but not convinced. They could not answer Jesus, but they would not acknowledge that he was right. Just because he so completely exposed their foolishness, they were afraid of him, and were beginning to hate him.

About this time they appear to have set spies upon him, to watch for something in his teaching or conduct that would enable them to show before the people that he was a wicked

man. Of course they found nothing really wrong in him. But as Jesus did not observe some of the petty religious customs of the Pharisees, these spies reported the instances in which he had not complied with them, and his enemies made use of such reports to create feeling against him.

They found out that his disciples, going through the fields one Sabbath, had pulled and eaten a little wheat. Now the Jewish Law said that it was wrong to do any work, such as threshing, on the Sabbath; and some of the Rabbis declared that rubbing heads of grain between the hands, to get out the kernels, was a kind of threshing, and therefore wrong on the seventh day of the week. When the Pharisees learned that some of Jesus' disciples had done this, they accused him of permitting Sabbath-breaking.

Another Sabbath day, in the Synagogue, he healed a man who had a withered hand; and again they raised a cry against him. He showed them how unfounded their accusation was; for the Law allowed them to help an animal in distress on the Sabbath; and if he might not heal the sick, then they made an ox of more value than a man.

When they saw him curing the insane ("casting out devils," it was called), they said that he himself was in league with devils, and this was why the evil spirits obeyed him. But Jesus answered that this was folly, for neither good spirits nor evil spirits would fight against those of their own kind.

It made not much difference, however, what Jesus said to the Pharisees. They were determined to make him out a bad man, so that they could persuade the people not to go and hear him preach. Unfortunately, they had a great deal of influence, and many were beginning to fear that it might be wrong to listen to this new doctrine.

Think how mean it was of these Pharisees to poison the public mind with such petty charges against one whose only thought was to do good,—one who loved them, even, while they were talking of getting him imprisoned or killed, and who knew, as they did not, what the truth and right really were. Contrast their spiteful feelings with the noble impulses that filled

Christ's heart. When he saw the multitude "like sheep without a shepherd," he was "moved with compassion." He felt like one sent, almost alone, to reap an immense field of precious grain. Turning to his disciples he said (we may be sure, with tears in his eyes), "Pray that God will send more laborers to help us in gathering this great harvest."

We pity the Pharisees, because they were stupid rather than wicked. And yet we cannot help despising them for their mean opposition, in the name of religion, to the greatest teacher of religion who has appeared among men.

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VI.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

MATT. v. 1-16. LUKE vi. 12-26.

THERE is an old saying, that every man is once in his life an orator. A man not accustomed to public speaking, but feeling deeply the importance of something that he wishes to say, may say it with the ease and force of a trained speaker. So if a man is a'ready an orator, there are times when he outdoes himself in eloquence. Probably there is one time when he speaks better than he ever has before or can again.

Jesus preached hundreds of discourses which we know nothing about. But there was one which seemed to make a particularly strong impression upon those who heard it, and which was therefore specially remembered. This is called the "Sermon on the Mount," because it was given on one of the hillsides lying a little way from Capernaum.

There is a reason — as will be seen when the circumstances are stated — why Jesus should have been more than usually moved at this time, and incited to put forth all his power. As yet, he had not said fully or clearly what he proposed to do as the Messiah, and very few of his disciples had thought much about it. They knew him as a great Prophet who taught beautiful and sublime truths and did "many wonderful works." They loved and revered him, — carried to him their troubles and difficulties, and found always comfort and help. He was a most helpful guide and friend, who, they hoped and believed, would yet become the Messiah King, — as we may hope that the wise public man whom we greatly admire will rise to high office.

But, on the other hand, the Pharisees and their friends, who disliked Jesus because he did not pay more heed to their trivial religious ceremonies, were beginning to say that if Jesus claimed

to be the Messiah, he was an impostor. This made the disciples anxious that Jesus should declare himself to be King at once, and show the Pharisees in the wrong by forcing all the people to obey him. His friends were beginning to demand that he should do something to silence the Pharisees; and he must answer the demand in some manner, or they would turn away from him.

Doubtless Jesus would have been glad to go on as usual, not saying much about himself as the Messiah, but gradually teaching the people that the true Kingdom of God could only come as their own hearts were filled with love and peace. By slow degrees he had hoped to banish from their minds the thoughts of war and bloodshed, which they connected with the beginning of the Messiah's reign, and to win all their affections to his pure and loving work. But now the enmity of the Pharisees would not permit this delay. As the disciples heard their master called an impostor, they wanted him to answer the charge immediately, by calling the power of God to his aid and making himself the Nation's King.

Jesus saw that he must now tell his friends to give up all thought of the worldly triumphs which they were hoping for. The lesson which he wanted to teach them by degrees he must put before them all at once. Would they be able to understand it? Could he make them see how much nobler than their own was his thought of the Kingdom of God? Would they not call him cowardly because he would not fight? Might not all their love for him be turned to contempt and hatred, if he suddenly told them that the work he had been doing was all he meant to do? You see that he was put in a dangerous situation, and had need of all his power as a teacher of the truth to carry him through the difficulty.

It was a custom of Jesus to escape often from the hot town when night came, and go out into the country entirely by himself. Here, climbing to some silent hilltop, he could throw himself down on the cool earth and rest under the quiet stars without danger of being disturbed. He needed more refreshment than he could find in the stifling air of the city, to give

him strength for his ceaseless and exhausting labors. These nights he sometimes spent wholly in prayer, when the morrow was to be a day of special trial.

Such a night alone with God he had passed on one of the hills near Capernaum before the day when this great sermon was delivered. When the morning came his disciples knew where to find him. Perhaps he had bidden them come out to a certain place to meet him. If so, they understood that he had something very important to say, and what could it be about except the setting up of the new Kingdom of God? The news quickly spread from one to another of those who called themselves disciples where Jesus was to be found, and early in the day they had gathered in great numbers upon the quiet hillside. Many of them doubtless thought that before the day was done they would be enlisted soldiers in a new army of the Lord, by whose resistless might the proud Pharisees and the hated Romans would alike be swept away.

When Jesus met his disciples, the first thing he did was to choose out twelve men from among them who were to be his Apostles,—which means “those sent out.” What a hush of expectation there must have been as one by one the names of these men were called and they stood apart in a group by themselves! Was Jesus about to declare himself King of the Jews, and were these to be his Generals and Councillors?

The choice completed, Jesus sat down, which was the signal that he was ready to speak. All eyes were eagerly fastened upon him, all ears were listening for his first word. “And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples,” says the Gospel, as if he had first cast down his gaze, considering for a little what he should say. What did they expect to hear? Something like this, perhaps: “Blessed are the strong arms and stout hearts that are now ready to fight for the Kingdom of God.” But the sound which broke the stillness was no trumpet-call to battle. With the same gentle, melodious voice which they had often heard, he said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

However little his hearers may have understood the full meaning of the eight Beatitudes which opened this sermon, the beauty of which nothing in human speech exceeds, they saw quickly enough that there was no purpose in the mind of Jesus answering to their hope of earthly riches and splendor, under his leadership. He spoke of mourning, hunger, meekness, and persecution. These were not the words of one who meant to put down his enemies by the strong hand of power. Many fiery hearts, longing to avenge the wrongs of the poor and oppressed, must have turned sick with disappointment as these words first fell upon them; and yet there was a charm in Jesus' speech which overcame their disappointment. Their better natures responded to the pure and lofty ideas put before them, though they but dimly felt the truth and grandeur of these ideas. When Jesus went on to say to them that they had a greater work to do than the followers of any worldly Prince; that they were "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world," and that it was their mission to stop the corruption of sin, to drive away the dark clouds of ignorance, — we may be sure that all danger of their breaking out into a tumult like that at Nazareth had passed away. Henceforth they must have listened to the end of the sermon with spell-bound interest.

What more Jesus said at this time we must consider in a new chapter.

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VII.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (*Continued*).

MATT. v. 17-48; vi., vii. LUKE vi. 27-49.

IN opening his sermon, Jesus had manifested the most gentle and delicate skill as a wise Physician of souls. Almost without hurt to their minds, he had taken away from his disciples their false ideas of the Kingdom of God, and put before them something of his own nobler thought of what that kingdom was to be. If you had long been wrongly picturing to yourself a place you were about to visit, and were to find out suddenly that it was entirely different from what you had supposed, — that would not be a pleasant discovery. Having made up your mind to see certain things, nothing else would seem half so nice. Jesus had to tell his disciples that they were looking for something which they could not find. Had he said to them bluntly that their hopes were childish and foolish, it would have angered them; but he told them in such words, that, as their dream of outward glory and power faded away, they began to see new visions of a world filled with peace and love, more beautiful than they had known before.

To take up again the thread of the sermon, the next truth declared by the Master to his disciples was, that the old Religion was to be "fulfilled," not destroyed. The leaves and stalks of a plant may die, but it "fulfils" its life in the seed it has ripened. So there was a truth in the old Religion of the Hebrews, which, like the seed of the plant, was the essential part of it. This truth should not be destroyed, but better known and obeyed in coming time. The great word of the Pharisees was "righteousness;" and they accused Jesus of being an enemy to righteousness because he did not observe some of their rules, though these rules were not in accordance with the meaning of the old commandments. But Jesus said

to his followers that they must observe the Law of righteousness more faithfully than the Pharisees, — by keeping its spirit, not its letter merely. And he gave them some examples of what he meant.

The Law said, "Thou shalt not kill." But they must do more than prevent themselves from becoming murderers: they must keep out of their hearts the anger and hatred which made people desire to kill.

The Law said that whoever made an oath to attest his words must keep it. The intent of the Law was to get people to tell the truth and do as they had promised. But many felt at liberty to deceive, when they had not made an oath. Some children, if they were told not to quarrel in the house, might think that they had full permission to quarrel out of doors. Jesus therefore said to his disciples that the Law, rightly understood, would not allow them ever to tell a lie. Their word should be as sacred as their oath. They should be so honest and truthful, that their simple "yea" and "nay" would be sufficient, and they would not need to call Heaven to witness their words.

The Law said, "An eye for an eye," — evil for evil. But Jesus said that his disciples must do better than this, and must answer evil with good. The saying, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," was not meant as a strict command; for then one might say that it did not apply if one was struck on the shoulder. It was meant to be an illustration of the great truth that when people do us harm we are not to think how we can pay them back, but how we can help them to conquer the evil passions that have led them to do wrong.

The Law said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor." But Jesus said, "You must love your enemies also. You are children of the Heavenly Father, who sends rain to both the evil and the good, and you must strive, in all your thoughts and feelings, to be perfect, even as He is perfect."

These were illustrations of the second part of the sermon, the purpose of which was to show, that as children of God men

must obey, not the words only, but the spirit of His commandments.

In the next place, the disciples were to do right because it was right, or for the sake of pleasing God, — not to make men speak well of them. People who prayed and fasted and gave to the poor for the sake of having their neighbors think them good and religious, Jesus called “hypocrites.” They were playing a part, not acting out themselves. It did not matter whether others knew of their good deeds or not; God saw everything that was done in secret, and He would reward them for being true to their duty. He did not care to have them always use the form of words which we call the Lord’s Prayer, or to go always into their closet when they prayed. He wanted them to pray to God without any thought of being heard by men, and to pray in simple language which expressed their need. The prayer which rose from their hearts, not that which they merely took upon their lips, was the prayer that God would answer.

The next part of the sermon, — that about laying up treasure in heaven rather than on the earth, — has been greatly misunderstood. We must see that Jesus was not giving formal and exact rules, but was trying, by forcible examples, to show what, in God’s sight, is the right and pure spirit. He did not wish men to give up thinking about their daily work, or to stop making provision for feeding and clothing their families. But he said, “You are too anxious about these things, as if food and clothing were in danger of being taken away, or there were no Father in heaven to take care of you. Does not God watch over the birds? And if you do the best you can from day to day, will He not provide for your needs also? Do not, therefore, spend to-day in fretting and worrying as to how the next day’s storm or hunger is to be met. Do what you can in the present, and trust God to take care of the future.” Meantime, the true riches are those of the heart. He is a foolish man who works so hard to obtain wealth that he destroys his health, and cannot enjoy his money after he has won it. The greatest treasure is a pure, strong, and healthy mind. That, therefore, it should be one’s greatest care to cultivate and preserve.

"Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned," the sermon proceeds. Try to see the good that is in men, rather than the evil. If you are always suspecting wrong in others, they will be suspicious of you. Our own feelings are like glasses through which we see the world. If we are selfish and mean, we shall see selfishness and meanness everywhere, for we are looking through colored spectacles. But the world is full of light to those who see out of pure eyes. And then, if there is a great splinter in your own eye, how can you see to remove the speck from another's eye? You must be good yourself, before you can do good to those about you.

Ask God to assist you; for He is more ready to help His children than they are to rely upon Him. To be like God, therefore, you must be ready to help others. Do good to those about you, as you would like them to do good to you. This is called Christ's "Golden Rule," — and if all would observe it, how much happier everybody would be!

Then something is said about the "strait gate" and the "narrow way," which we might illustrate by a ship sailing into or out of a harbor. It will not answer for her captain to drift with the wind and tide. He must trim his sails, and steer his course very carefully to keep in the direct channel. So must we be careful of our way, to escape the perils on either hand. For one thing, we must avoid false teachers and evil companions, who would lead us astray. We "shall know them by their fruits," and must beware of those whose deeds are evil, as we shun poisonous plants.

Finally, Jesus closed his sermon by telling his disciples that if they followed his teachings they would be like a man who built his house upon a rock; but if they did not practise what he said, they were like a man whose house was built on nothing but sand, which the floods soon washed away.

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VIII.

THE MESSAGE FROM JOHN.

MATT. xi. 1-19. LUKE vii. 18-35.

WE must constantly remember that it was difficult for Jesus to make even his nearest friends understand what he meant by the "Messiah," and the "Kingdom of God." They had so long cherished a hope of political greatness and power, that it was hard to remove that dream from their minds. They wished, first of all, for a Messiah who would drive the Romans out of the country. They desired that God should make them masters over other nations, as the Romans then were. Jesus was working for a far loftier purpose. He saw that the world would be no better or happier with the Jews for its masters, than under the power of the Romans. Indeed, if the Pharisees could have obtained universal control, they would have been more cruel and oppressive to other nations than the Romans were to them.

Jesus knew that the world would never be any better till men had learned the great principles of justice, mercy, and love. It was his mission to teach them how God would have his children live together in peace and joy. But it would take men a long while to learn that lesson. The change that Jesus wished to bring about would not come soon enough to ease many of the burdens of his living countrymen; and we need not wonder that to most of them the work he was doing seemed just nothing at all.

So it seemed to John in his prison. For something like half a year now, he had been shut up in a strong fortress near the Dead Sea, and prevented from preaching. His friends, however, were allowed to visit him, and through their reports he knew all that was going on. He had gone to prison well content to leave his work in the hands of the Messiah, who had been

made known to him. But as the months wore away and still Jesus did nothing that John had supposed he would do, the impetuous spirit of the Prophet began to be troubled. Why was there so much delay on the part of the Messiah, about the establishment of his kingdom? Still he curbed his impatience, held his peace, and waited.

At last came news of the Sermon on the Mount. Many had thought, when they went out to hear that Sermon, that Jesus was about to declare himself the Nation's King. John had long been listening eagerly for tidings of such a proclamation. What a bitter disappointment it must have been to him, to learn that at such a time, with hundreds of faithful disciples about him, who were ready to obey his call to arms, Jesus had talked only of loving one's enemies! Were these the words of one whose business it was to draw the sword against the enemies of God, and destroy all wicked men? Had he been mistaken? Was that revelation by the Jordan only a dream, and was Jesus not the true Messiah after all?

But it was possible that the time for action had not come. It was not for him in his prison to judge blindly or rashly; and yet, to quiet his doubts, he would fain have some assurance from Jesus himself that all was going well. So he sent some of his friends to ask Jesus in his name, "Art thou the coming One (that is, the Messiah), or must we look for another?"

When the messengers came where Jesus was, they found him teaching and healing as usual. They were not very discreet; for instead of seeking a private audience, they put their question openly before the people. It is even possible that they did this purposely, with intent to place him where he must give them a direct "yes" or "no." For his disciples would expect him to answer in a plain and straightforward way, and he must risk losing their regard if he tried to evade the question.

But Jesus could not answer either way without conveying a false impression. If he said, "Yes, I am the Messiah," John would understand by such language that, after a little, Jesus meant to set himself up as a King, — a thing which he did not mean to do at all. If Jesus answered, "No, I am not the

Messiah," that would be untrue ; for he believed that he was already fulfilling the real mission of the Messiah, and that John did not understand the purpose of God declared through the Prophets.

Yet a reply of some kind must be sent back. Jesus did not wish to offend John or his friends, for he continually hoped that, in course of time, he could lead them to believe about the Messiah as he did.

Now if John's friends had planned their question as a snare to catch Jesus and get a definite answer from him, they entirely failed. He was never at a loss, under the most trying circumstances, for just the right thing to say. "Go back and tell John," he replied, "what you have heard and seen of me, here among my disciples ; and say to him, Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me."

The answer meant, in the first place, "You have seen me doing what no man can do except the power of God be with him. If my words and deeds do not convince you that I am the Messiah, what is the use of my saying that I am he?" In the next place, the answer was a gentle rebuke of John's impatience : not one which would sting by its harshness, but such a kindly and friendly reproof as always goes deeper than angry expostulation. The answer was in accord with what has been already said of the wish of Jesus, the wish to have others find out for themselves that he was the Messiah, without his telling them.

So the messengers departed exactly as wise as they came, unless they had learned from the bearing of Jesus what they wished to know. How John received the answer, we are not told. But he must have felt the reproof contained in it, for he did not afterward attempt to dictate to Jesus what should be done.

When the messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the people about John, and used one very remarkable expression. John was no "reed shaken with the wind," no smooth-spoken man "clothed in soft raiment." He was "a prophet, and more than a prophet ;" for he was the messenger from God to an-

nounce the coming of the Messiah. "But great as he is," said Jesus, "they that are little in the kingdom of heaven are greater than he." What did he mean by that saying?

When Jesus spoke of heaven, he referred to that world of spirits to which we go after death; but when he used the expression "*kingdom of heaven*," he meant the new and more heavenly kind of life which he had come to establish upon the earth.

How he could say that the least among his true followers was greater than this mighty prophet, we shall perhaps understand, if we think how much more we value the small gift which comes from a heart full of love for us, than the costly present bestowed coldly and without affection. Jesus meant that John's religion was too much an outside affair, a thing of laws and ceremonies; and that a religion growing out of the heart's love for God and man, was better than a great deal of merely formal worship and righteousness. The two kinds of religion are entirely different, and we may say that the small beginnings of such religion as Jesus taught are better than the largest growth of such as John depended upon; as we would say that the tiniest spear of wheat is more important than the tallest thistle.

What Jesus said further about the "children sitting in the market place" probably refers to some game which the children of his day were accustomed to play. He complained that, like boys and girls in that idle play, the same people who rejected John, because of his rigid requirements as to food and drink, rejected *him* also, because he made no such requirements, but left the pure mind to do as it pleased in such matters. What folly, to abuse one man because he does not eat and drink like other people, and condemn another because he does! "No matter," said Jesus, "Wisdom is justified by those who judge wisely, though foolish people fill the air with their murmurings."

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IX.

JESUS AND THE SINNERS.

LUKE vii. 36-50.

THE Pharisees called Jesus "a friend of publicans and sinners," as a term of reproach; though in giving him that name they were really accusing themselves, and doing him an honor. They were hard-hearted and brutal enough not to care for the suffering of others. He was the friend of all who needed help; and surely, no one is ever in greater want of friendly assistance than those who have fallen into evil ways, and called down upon themselves the punishment which always follows sin.

Neither the rich nor the religious people of Christ's day gave themselves much trouble to help these unfortunates. The Pharisees were doubly cased with indifference against the appeal of the sinful. In the first place, they said of all who suffered because of wrong-doing, "It serves them right." They did not see that it might be harder for some to keep the Law than for others; and that circumstances sometimes made it all but impossible for weak people to conquer temptation without help. "Look at us," they said, "we have done nothing wrong. Others could be as good as we, if they wished; and if they have not wished, they deserve no pity for their misfortunes."

In the next place, the Pharisees were afraid of such people, and avoided them, much as we shun those from whom we might catch disease. The Pharisees did not think that God had any pity for sinners. He who did wrong, they said, was God's enemy, and God hated him. They were not merely afraid of being led astray by evil companions. We could not blame them for that. But they thought God would be angry with them, if He saw them even speaking to any of His enemies, in a friendly manner.

This way of treating the sinful was both wrong and ridiculous. It was cruel to leave people to suffer when they had done wrong, if a little timely help would lead them out of evil and cure their misery. It was foolish to be so fearful of being thought friendly with them as not to dare speak a kindly and encouraging word.

We may learn how differently Jesus treated those who had become victims of evil habits, — and how they loved and almost worshipped him for his goodness toward them, from an event which transpired not long after that related in the previous chapter. Where it happened, we are not told; but as Jesus still made his home in Capernaum, and spent part of his time going about to other places, it was probably in one of the neighboring villages which were scattered up and down the shore of the lake. Jesus had undoubtedly been preaching during the morning, and afterward he was asked to dinner by a Pharisee named Simon. What Simon's purpose was in giving the invitation, we can only conjecture. It could not have been to show respect for Jesus, for he did not treat him as an honored guest. Moreover, the Pharisees were already openly opposed to Jesus, and he had spoken some words about them which they could not easily forgive. We may imagine that Simon was one of those ignorant but conceited people who think everybody must be eager to have their advice; and that he asked Jesus to dinner for the purpose of showing him the error of his ways. He must have seen that Jesus had great talents, and perhaps supposed that, by talking to him a little while apart from his disciples, he could induce him to conform to the ideas and customs of the Pharisees.

At all events, Jesus went home with Simon, and was received into the house with scant courtesy. All orientals are distinguished for their stately and ceremonious hospitality. Among the Jews, the host met his guest at the door with a kiss. The dusty sandals having been removed at the entrance, water was at once brought by a servant to bathe the naked feet; and before the guest was conducted to the table, his hair was perfumed with oil, by the host's own hands. At this time many Jews

had adopted the custom practised by other Eastern nations, of partly reclining at their meals upon low couches, the head being placed toward the table, and the feet extending outward.

Jesus did not receive any of the special marks of esteem above spoken of, — though he was probably more amused than hurt by Simon's somewhat lofty bearing. The room, it is likely, was rapidly filled, after the guests had taken their places. The door of an Eastern house is always easily passed, and many must have been anxious to hear the conversation between Jesus and Simon. Among the rest a poor, degraded woman took courage to enter. She had doubtless heard Jesus speak during the morning, and under the influence of his words a desire to lead a new and better life had taken possession of her. He had given her hope and strength, and now she longed to be near him; for no one can tell what love and gratitude she must have felt toward him who had broken the fetters of evil by which she had been enslaved.

She certainly would not have been allowed to enter the house, if any of Simon's friends had observed her; but their attention being fastened upon the conversation about the table, she was able to make her way through the crowd, to the foot of the couch upon which Jesus was lying. Here she stood silently weeping, her hot tears falling upon the outstretched feet of Jesus as she bent over them. When she saw this, she knelt down and with her long hair wiped away the stains. Then an impulse seized her to kiss the feet of him who had brought heaven's love and forgiveness to such as she. Forgetful, in her great emotion, of those who stood by, not once only but again and again she pressed her lips to the feet, which she had already bathed with her tears; and drawing forth a box of precious ointment she covered them with the cooling, fragrant compound.

By this time the attention of the company had been directed to her presence. She doubtless would have escaped when she found that all were looking at her, anticipating a sharp rebuke from the master of the house, had not Jesus by a gesture detained her. He saw the frown of angry disgust on Simon's brow, and knew that the proud Pharisee was thinking meanly of him for allowing such a woman to touch him. "Simon," he

said, "I have something to say unto thee." "Say on, Rabbi," Simon coldly replied.

"A certain man had two debtors. One owed him five hundred and the other fifty pence. They could not pay him, and he released them both from their debt. Tell me therefore, which will love him most." "I suppose he to whom most was forgiven," that is, "he whose debt was largest," Simon answered, rather indifferently. "Thou hast rightly judged," continued Jesus. Then, turning to the woman, "Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet; she hath washed them with her tears. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she hath covered my feet with kisses. Thou didst not anoint my head; and she hath anointed my feet. I say unto thee, her sins are forgiven. To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. Her sins have been many, and she loveth much."

"Thy sins are forgiven," he said, addressing the woman for the first time. Instantly, murmurs began to arise, as they did on a previous occasion when Jesus used these words. "Who is this, that he should assume to forgive sins?" the people exclaimed. But he, not disturbed by their clamors, dismissed the woman with the beautiful and gracious assurance, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Why did Jesus say "Thy sins are forgiven"? Because, for one reason, he felt that, as the Messiah, God had given him authority to speak in His name. But even if he had not been convinced of this, he knew the nature of God so well as to be perfectly assured, that when any repentance was so hearty as this woman's, it would certainly have God's forgiveness.

It is with no little satisfaction that we note the rebuke Jesus intended for Simon. That hard-hearted person needed forgiveness as much as any one, if he had only known it. We may be sure there was a sarcastic tone in Jesus' voice, which gave Simon to understand that if he was one to whom little was forgiven, it was only because he did not repent of his sins.

We note also that while Jesus had not said a word to resent the slight put upon himself, when he saw how Simon despised

the poor woman, and how little her grief touched the proud heart of the Pharisee, he was instantly aroused to shield her from cruelty. That which most impresses us in this story, is the pity and kindness shown on the part of Jesus toward one for whom others felt nothing but contempt. She, too, was in his sight a child of God. She could escape the evil that had filled her life with wretchedness, and become pure and happy like others of God's children. Jesus saw that she was fully resolved to put away her wicked life, and needed only the help of his encouragement. This he gave to her, in the words which have carried comfort and strength to thousands of repentant hearts, "Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace."

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X.

TEACHING BY PARABLES.

MATT. xiii. 1-43. MARK iv. 1-34. LUKE viii. 1-15.

WHEN Jesus found how little the people really understood and remembered of his teaching, and that while they were so eager to hear him speak, many were more impressed by his manner than by the truth of what he said, he began to make use of vivid illustrations, called "parables." These parables were easily remembered, and many of them have been preserved.

On one occasion he spoke to the people entirely in parables. It was in Capernaum, and on a day when an unusually large crowd had gathered to hear him. He had gone down to the shore, perhaps to get the cool breeze blowing from the lake. The people followed him in such numbers that they pushed and jostled to get near him, and the flat beach afforded no elevation from which he could make them all hear. So he stepped into one of the boats lying moored to the shore, and his disciples taking the oars pushed out a little from the land. Here he was away from the crowd, and had the whole multitude before him within reach of his voice. As he looked up over the heads of the people and away to the hillsides beyond the town, he may have seen the farmers scattering seed in their fields, and perhaps it was this which gave him the hint of what he should say.

"Hearken!" he said, when he was ready to speak. "Behold a sower went forth to sow. And some of his seed fell on the hard, trodden paths, where the birds came and picked it up. Some fell on stony ground where there was not much soil. Immediately this seed sprang up; but the sun soon scorched it, and because it had no deep root it withered away. Some of the seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, so that it bore no fruit. Some fell on good ground, and this alone brought forth abundantly."

Another parable he spoke : " The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good wheat in his field. But during the night his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. So when the wheat began to grow there were many weeds mingled with it. The laborers came and told the master of the field, and asked if they should pull up the tares. But he said, 'By no means, for you would pull up the wheat also. Let both grow till the harvest time. Then we will separate the wheat from the tares, and the tares shall be burned.' "

Again, Jesus said to the people : " The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed, which is indeed the smallest of all seeds. But when it is grown it becomes a tree, so that the birds come and build their nests on its branches. Or, once more, the kingdom of heaven is like the leaven (that is, the yeast) which a housewife puts into her meal in making bread, and which spreads till it has penetrated the whole mass." Other parables Jesus perhaps spoke at this time, and all were told more at length.

But what do these parables mean ? We may gather some idea of how difficult it was for Jesus to make others see his meaning, from the fact that not even his disciples fully understood what he had been saying, till he explained it to them. The task of teaching these people the lofty truths that filled Christ's mind, was much like trying to teach geometry to a class which has not mastered the rudiments of arithmetic.

After the discourse was over, the disciples wished to know why their master had adopted this new way of teaching. He answered that it was the only way in which he could hope to make the people understand what he had to say about the kingdom of heaven. Some have thought that Jesus taught in parables to prevent the people from understanding him. But this is a foolish supposition ; for, as he depended on nothing but his teaching for the success of his new religion, it was for his interest to make his ideas as widely known as possible.

It must have been somewhat discouraging to him, to find that even his disciples wanted the parables explained. But he probably knew that such pictures would fix themselves in the

memory of those who heard them, even if they did not at first see their meaning, and would be thought about till the truth contained in them began to appear. Herein we see how Jesus was guided by his wise knowledge of human nature. The merchant at a fair knows that if he stands behind a plain counter, all the people will pass him by. So he makes for himself a booth, covered with bright colors which attract the eye of the multitude, and then they throng about him. So Jesus found that in giving to the crowd such sayings as the Beatitudes, it was too much like putting "pearls before swine." The crowd wanted a sensation. They liked the excitement attending large gatherings, and hoped always to witness some great miracle. Jesus began therefore to put his sayings into the form of these bright pictures, in the hope that these would be cherished and remembered by those who hardly bestowed a second thought upon his greater utterances. It was no cheap way of attracting the multitude, for many of these parables are among the most beautiful stories that the world contains. He used them as one tells fairy stories to little children, putting into them a moral, which, without the story, children would not easily understand or remember.

"The sower," Jesus said, in answer to his disciples' question, "is he who goeth out to teach the words of wisdom." There are some hearts as hard as trodden paths. Inspiring words fall into them, but evil thoughts come and snatch them away before they have taken root. Jesus here referred to people like many of the Pharisees, who, under their religious appearance, carried hearts that were full of cruelty and wicked desire. The bad thoughts of such people swallow up the good ones, as soon as these latter come into their minds.

Then there are some hearts not bad, but simply weak and shallow, like stony ground. They hear the truth with joy, and resolve to obey it. But they have little courage or power of endurance, and so their good resolutions soon perish. Any of us can name such people, and we must all be aware at times that we ourselves are too much like them.

Again, there are hearts full of worldly cares and ambitions,

like thorns and brambles in a garden. The words of truth fall into them and grow for a little time. But the weeds grow faster, and the good purposes do not bear fruit.

But always some good seed falls into honest, strong, and faithful hearts, where it grows up, and brings forth abundant fruit of happiness and peace. These were the hearts which Jesus depended upon. He did not care how many strong arms were offered to help make him a king. He wanted hearts which would receive and obey his teaching, and show the world how glorious its results would be.

To understand the parable of the wheat and the tares, we must remember that people were expecting the Messiah, when he came, to destroy all the wicked, and leave only the good to inherit the land. But Jesus knew that in the event of a great war, the good would be killed as well as the wicked. One cannot pull up the tares without pulling up much wheat also. The bad people cannot all be punished as they deserve immediately, and the good people must not think that they are to have it all their own way on earth. They must learn to wait patiently for their reward, and must not complain if the wicked seem to thrive for a time more than they ought.

The two parables, one of the mustard-seed, and the other of the leaven, were spoken to those who wanted the kingdom of heaven to come all at once and make everybody happy. Jesus meant to show that this kingdom must grow and spread from small beginnings. Always, we see, while the people about him were planning how the outside world could be set right, Jesus was trying to turn their attention inward to their own hearts. If the fountain be muddy, the stream that flows from it will be muddy also. Jesus knew that what was in the hearts of men must color their deeds, and that the world could be made better only by establishing right feelings and pure thoughts within the mind itself.

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XI.

THE TWELVE SENT OUT TO PREACH.

MATT. x. MARK vi. 7-13. LUKE ix. 1-6.

You will remember that just before the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus selected twelve men out of the whole body of his disciples, who were to attend him in all his journeys. Most of his followers continued their usual occupations, only going to hear Jesus preach when he came into their neighborhood. But these twelve gave up their business entirely, in order to be with their Master. On their journeys and during quiet intervals, Jesus employed himself in teaching this little band, so that they might, after a time, go out and preach his truth to the people. Indeed, he sometimes took them quite apart into desert places, where the multitude could not follow them, and where he could teach them without interruption.

He had good reason to choose these men with care, and to devote much of his time to their instruction; for upon their courage, and faith, and power to do what he wished of them, depended the success of his whole mission. Suppose that a sea captain has been entrusted by his Government with important despatches, which are to stop a great war in a distant land. He sets sail, but his ship encounters storms which come near wrecking her. At last he sees a tempest gathering which he knows his ship cannot outlive. His station will be at the post of danger, and very likely he will be drowned. So he calls about him some of the sailors, tells them of the message he is carrying, and charges them, that, when the hour of shipwreck comes and all take to the boats, if he is lost they must keep together; and must make it their first and highest duty to preserve and deliver the despatches which he puts into their hands.

Something like this was the task Jesus gave to these twelve disciples. He already saw that the enemies who were rising up against him would sooner or later put him to death. Then most of those who had heard him so gladly would, he knew, fall back under the influence of the Pharisees. They would be like the seed sown on stony ground, and when trouble came, the new life in their hearts would soon wither away. Therefore, if his teachings were ever to reach the great world, he must train up a few of his disciples to remain steadfast through great trial and danger. This was why he had called the twelve to be always near him ; and while he was doing what good he could to the people at large, it was his special work to fit these chosen men to continue his work, if he should be suddenly taken away.

But the time had now come when Jesus wished to make trial of the twelve, by sending them out to preach. Two by two they were to go forth, to follow their Master's example of teaching and healing, but without the encouragement and support of his presence. Jesus must have been somewhat anxious about the result ; for though he was always sustained by his confidence that God had sent him, and would give him the victory, yet if these men failed in their mission, that victory would seem very far away. He was as one finding his way at night through a pathless forest ; and though he knew the sun would rise at length to show him his direction, the hours of uncertainty must have been, at times, hard to bear. He could not tell how well the twelve would acquit themselves. If they were to return discouraged, saying that they could not preach successfully, it would be a serious blow to the hopes he had formed.

We may imagine them gathered about him, in the centre of a large circle of friends and followers, and Jesus talking to them earnestly, of the difficulties they must encounter, and the way in which they were to conduct themselves. First, he told them, they must go only to the cities and villages of their own nation, because they would succeed much better with their own people than among strangers. They were to carry the message with which Jesus, and John before him, began their preaching, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were to proclaim

that the time had come for the world to be made better and happier, as the Prophets had foretold.

They must make no provision for their needs upon the journey, and must never take pay for any help they might give to others. Jesus knew that religion would always be degraded when men turned it into a business, and aimed to make money out of it. If his disciples were able to work cures like their master, it would be easy for them to get rich very fast by taking pay for their services. But that was just what he did not wish them to do; for when men are eager to fill their purses, they are apt to forget the Kingdom of God. If the twelve were able to do the good which Jesus hoped of them, they would find friends to give them shelter and food. He knew they would not suffer, and that their power as heralds of the truth would be gone, if they yielded to sordid or selfish aims.

Wherever they went, they must be courteous and peaceable. If the people of any place would listen to them, well and good. If they would not listen, the disciples were simply to turn away from them. "In the day of judgment," said Jesus, "it shall be worse for that place than for the heathen cities, Sodom and Gomorrah." These cities, according to Hebrew tradition, had been destroyed by fire from heaven, because of their wickedness. Jesus thus reminded his disciples that they could leave the punishment of such places in the hand of God. Some of them afterward wished him to call down fire from heaven, upon a village which had refused to receive them, — a request which horrified their Master. Knowing that they might get into a rage, and denounce curses against those who would not listen to them, he wished to impress it upon their minds that God would take care of the punishment of such people.

"Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," continued Jesus. This shows what faith he had in the power of truth and goodness. It would be folly, of course, to send defenceless lambs among a pack of hungry wolves, in order that the lambs might teach the wolves peace, and impart to them their own gentle nature. Yet Jesus charged the disciples to go among fierce and wicked people, doing no evil, not

speaking or even thinking the least violence, and by their noble words and pure conduct shame men out of passion and wrongdoing. He knew, what the experience of the world has proved, that a good example has more power than any amount of teaching to win people toward the right.

But they must be wise as serpents, while they were harmless as doves; must keep out of danger as much as they could, and must not make a great parade of their virtues, for that would only anger men the more. With all their caution, however, they would probably be sometimes arrested for teaching ideas contrary to the general belief. At such times, the spirit of God would teach them what to say before the judge, in their own defence. And if the judge, unmoved by their plea, refused to set them at liberty, what could he do to them? At most he could only order them to be killed. He could not touch their souls, or take away the reward that was laid up for them in heaven. "Be not afraid of that which harms the body only, but be afraid of that which harms the immortal soul," namely, desertion of duty. It was like saying, "Be more fearful of being a coward than you are of death itself."

"Go forth, then," Jesus concluded, "and speak in the open light of day what I have taught you during hours of darkness. Proclaim from the housetops what you have heard from my lips in secret chambers. Be not afraid of the power of men. That God who watches over the sparrows will be your guide and protector. Troubles will attend you, for evil men will fight against the goodness which condemns them, and the truth must be, at first, as a sword which provokes strife. But no one can be worthy of this mission upon which you are sent, unless he be willing to give up everything he holds dear — his life even, for its sake. And be assured that you will not make such sacrifices for a slight purpose. If you can persuade any heart to receive my Gospel, it is the same as if it received me to its love; and to receive me is the same as receiving God who sent me. Whatever you can do to increase peace and good-will among men, if it be only to give a cup of cold water to the thirsty, shall not lose its reward."

With such inspiring words did Jesus send forth the first of that long line of preachers who, during more than eighteen hundred years, have carried his Gospel all over the world and spoken it in every language. Now, he who can unfold its meaning is sure of winning the attention of others; but then it was an untried experiment to the few who had enough faith in Jesus to make the endeavor. We must leave these brave disciples, departing upon their separate journeys, while we follow their Master into other scenes.

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XII.

JESUS VISITS JERUSALEM.

JOHN V.

THE Gospel of John tells us of several visits which Jesus made to Jerusalem, while his home was still in Capernaum. This Gospel gives a very slight account of the ministry in Galilee, while the others say nothing of his having been in Jerusalem during this time. As has been already pointed out, the different writers would most prominently remember different things. The writer of John's Gospel seems to have been most interested in what took place in and about the capital of the nation. Perhaps one or two of the disciples were there with Jesus more than the others, and it is through them that the account of these visits has come down to us. They have not been spoken of before, because they do not throw any important light upon the progress of the narrative. But now, as it seems probable that when he had sent the twelve away to preach, Jesus himself went for a few days to Jerusalem, we may follow him, for the purpose of showing that he found there the same troubles which had hindered his work in Galilee.

In the great city, Jesus was almost a stranger. The people had heard of his preaching in the North, but few had ever seen him, and he could walk about without being recognized. Perhaps it was one purpose of his visit, to escape the multitude which thronged about him in Galilee. Certainly he must have needed rest, and must have enjoyed moving among the people once more, unknown, and free from their curious stare.

On the Sabbath, as he was walking the streets of the city, he came upon the Pool of Bethesda, — what we should call a small reservoir. Jerusalem at this time was well supplied with water,

and there were numerous basins and rock-hewn cisterns in which it was stored. This Pool of Bethesda was fed by springs which had some mineral properties, and had become noted for its healing power. Probably these springs bubbled up only at intervals, for such springs are still to be found in the city. It is said to have been the belief of the people that when this bubbling occurred, an angel was "troubling" the water, and that at such times they could be cured by stepping into the pool.

The pool was surrounded by wide porches. These were filled with a great crowd of people afflicted by all sorts of diseases. Every time the water was "troubled," the crowd rushed and scrambled down the steps into the pool: for it was supposed that only those who were foremost, could get the full benefit of its healing power. As the cure was gradual, the same people remained day after day, and the same mad rush may have occurred several times each day.

This was the place in which Jesus found himself, as he was walking about the city. He made his way among the wretched groups, but spoke to no one, for he did not wish to make himself known. Suddenly, some one who had been watching, saw the waters begin to boil, and hurrying down the steps, plunged in. At once the whole crowd started up. Cries of rage and pain filled the air, as each one struggled to be foremost. Many of them were only troubled with some disease of the eyes, and being strong and healthy in other respects, they roughly pushed back the feebler folk.

Among the rest, Jesus saw one weak, tottering form, vainly striving to get down into the water. He was thrust aside by one and another, till at last the whole pool was filled, and he was left standing upon the steps, with no hope of getting into the water at all. Jesus saw the weariness and disappointment in his face, as he painfully made his way back to his mat and sank down upon it. The sight of his distress was more than the pitying heart of Jesus could bear. The porch was quite deserted, and he could speak to the man without attracting notice. Approaching and stooping over him, Jesus asked, "Dost thou desire to be healed?" The man turned his face to meet such a look of

sympathy and pity as he never saw before. "Alas, sir!" he replied, "I have no friend to help me. The crowd push me back and I cannot get into the water." He doubtless hoped that this kind stranger would remain and assist him next time the waters were troubled. But instead of making that offer, Jesus simply said, "Rise! take up your bed and walk."

What was it in the tone that fell upon the sick man's ear, or in the look that met his eye, which so thrilled him through and through? Suddenly he felt as if he could walk, easily and strongly; as if he must obey; and rising to his feet, he picked up his mat and walked away. It must have been like moving in a dream, to find strength in his limbs after so many years of feebleness; and such was his state of wondering amazement that he did not stop to thank Jesus, or even to ask who he was. Neither did he remember, what Jesus had most likely forgotten for the moment, that it was the Sabbath day, and that according to the Law, it was wicked for him to be carrying a burden. He did not get far before he was stopped, the people demanding of him, "why he was carrying his bed on the Sabbath?" The man replied naturally enough, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed and walk.'"

When the Pharisees heard this they thought at once of Jesus of Nazareth. We may suppose that they already knew him to be in the city; but as they could not punish him for what he had done in Galilee, they were waiting till they could find some accusation which would bring him before their own judges. Here was a clear case of Sabbath-breaking, — the old charge so often brought against him in the North. "Who was he that said, 'Take up thy bed and walk'?" they asked the man. But he did not know. So, as yet, they had only their suspicions, and no proof. The man might, however, recognize the one who had cured him, if there should be a chance meeting. They would not fail to command him to let them know if such a meeting occurred; and, in order to hide from him the infamous part they wished him to play, they probably professed a great desire to see such a wonderful person as his unknown friend must be.

Soon afterward, perhaps the same day, Jesus met the man in the temple. Jesus recognized him and spoke to him, showing that he was entirely unsuspecting of the plot that had been laid by the Pharisees. The man, — not with any bad design, we may be sure, — pointed out Jesus to some of the Pharisees as the one who had "made him whole." If he had wished to do Jesus an injury, he would have said, "This is the man who made me break the Sabbath." But he was thinking only of his cure, and supposed that the Pharisees would honor the prophet who could do such things.

But they were far enough from wishing to pay Jesus any honor. They now had their proof, and, it would seem, went straightway and had Jesus arrested. We cannot be certain just how much is meant by the writer of the Gospel, who says, that because Jesus had done these things on the Sabbath, the Jews "persecuted" him. They may only have spoken against him before the people, but it is more likely that they tried to have him punished by their courts. But in whatever way they attacked him, he met them with an eloquent defense, which put them to silence, and soon afterward he left Jerusalem.

The opposition to Jesus was, then, as bitter and determined in Jerusalem as elsewhere. Perhaps he had hoped, that if his enemies should drive him out of Galilee, he might find less prejudice and ignorance to contend with in the nation's capital. But if such had been his hope, this chance encounter convinced him that he could expect no better fortune in Jerusalem than had attended his work in the North. Wherever he turned, he was certain to meet angry looks, and a hatred which all his love and wisdom could not change to sympathy.

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XIII.

DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MATT. xiv ; xv. 1-20. MARK vi. 17-56 ; vii. 1-23. LUKE ix. 7-10.

WE must now return once more to that great Prophet, the story of whose life and death is so strangely interwoven with the career of Jesus. When Jesus was returning home from the banks of the Jordan, after his baptism, the country was suddenly put into a blaze of excitement by news of John's imprisonment. Again, Jesus had just returned from a journey, when the whole land was thrown into angry commotion by tidings that John had been killed in his prison. The twelve disciples had also just returned from preaching among the people, and we should be glad to know what degree of success had crowned their labors. But the gospels merely say that they gave their Master an account of their doings. This other event, the death of John, seems to have put everything else into the background, for the time being. You remember how the country was horrified when our President Garfield was shot by an assassin. Something like that must have been the impression produced throughout Palestine by the murder of John ; for he was a man almost universally loved and revered by the common people.

Herod had long wished to put him to death. But he had not dared to do it, because he feared that the people might rise in rebellion to avenge the loss of their prophet. He was afraid of John, for if that still mighty man should send forth a command to his numerous followers, to seize arms and fight the Romans, they would instantly obey. Yet if he put John to death, he had reason to fear that these same followers would drench the land with blood.

It is said, however, that the deed which Herod was too timid to undertake, he was forced into by a woman's resentment. Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother, while his brother was yet living ; and John had denounced the marriage in his preaching. This, Herodias never forgot or forgave, and at last she took a bloody revenge. A dancing girl, said to have been the daughter of Herodias, so pleased the king, as she danced before him during one of his drunken feasts, that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask for. She, being instructed by her mother, demanded the head of John the Baptist, and Herod ordered it to be struck off in fulfilment of his pledge. So runs the story, though there are reasons for thinking it was the Pharisees who persuaded Herod that he might safely put John out of the way.

But how did all this affect Jesus ? He knew that the Pharisees, his enemies as well as John's, had been desiring to have John killed, and he more than suspected that they had moved Herod to end the great prophet's life. Naturally, he himself would be the next victim of their hatred. He was John's successor, and though he had not yet won so much power as John held over the nation at large, yet the Pharisees had already marked him as a dangerous man. With John gone, they would not long delay the blow which they were ready to aim at him.

Now Jesus was not afraid to die, but he did not mean to let the Pharisees kill him before he had accomplished his task. He was ready to give his life for the good of the world, but he would not throw it away uselessly. When he was sure that his disciples were able to carry on the work that he wished to commit to their hands, he could face his enemies and let them do their worst. But he would have been unfaithful to the trust which he felt God had reposed in him, if he had not guarded against danger, while he had yet much work to do. Therefore he determined to go away with the twelve, into some remote place, out of harm's reach.

There was another reason why he should do this. He was so well known, and his disciples were so accustomed to think and speak of him as the Messiah, that the people might seize

him and try to make him king in Herod's place. They were ready to fight, and all they wanted was a leader. They might throng about him demanding that he should lead them to battle. Jesus knew that if a war should once begin it would end all the hopes he had formed. His people could not long succeed against the trained soldiers of Rome, which Herod could summon to his aid. If they had gone to war then, as they did a few years afterward, they would only have been defeated and dispersed so many years the sooner ; and the religion which Christ taught would have perished before it had been heard of by the outside world. The Jewish nation was, to the great Roman Empire, no more than a fly to a lion, in point of physical strength. But Jesus had determined that his handful of friends should be made mightier than all the armies of Rome, through their possession of the truth ; and in order to teach them aright, he must have peace.

Imagine a city ruled over by a cruel and wicked king, and having underneath it a large magazine filled with powder. The people are driven to desperation by the oppression to which they are subjected, and they come with lighted torches to blow up this magazine ; for, they say, "An explosion will destroy the tyrant." But there is one man who stands guard over the deadly mine, and he is the very man whom the people would like to make their ruler. He will not allow his friends to do what they wish, because that would destroy the city as well as kill the king.

The hot-blooded countrymen of Jesus were longing for a war, an explosion of some kind, which would drive away the Romans, whatever else it might do. It was not at all impossible for Jesus to put himself at the head of this war party, drag Herod from the throne and establish himself upon it, at least for some brief while. But if such a dream had been a hundred times more attractive, it would not have made Jesus waver. He did not want to be king ; for if he could teach men those laws of God upon which all their happiness depends, he could do more for the world than all kings put together. He had to think, not only of preserving his own life, but of quieting the public

excitement and preventing a sudden outbreak. Under the circumstances, his absence was better than his presence. If the people could not find him they would soon give up their wish to fight, for lack of a leader.

So he took the twelve and went off into a "desert place." They went in a boat across the lake ; but the people watched the boat and followed along the shore, carrying their sick people for Jesus to heal. Even in the desert he soon found himself once more surrounded by a crowd.

Then he seems to have gone back to the vicinity of Capernaum, for the purpose of taking a new start in another direction. Among the people who followed him, there were spies, who had dogged his footsteps all the way from Jerusalem. They probably supposed that Jesus was much frightened since John's death, and that if they put some questions to him, he would answer so timidly as to make his disciples ashamed of him. They thought it was a good time to destroy the respect which the people had for him ; for if they could lead him to show himself a coward, all the people would despise him. So they approached him in an insolent, overbearing way and demanded to know " why he allowed his disciples to be so irreligious as to omit washing their hands before eating ! " For the Jews washed their hands as a religious ceremony, but Jesus and his friends washed only for the sake of cleanliness.

Now Jesus knew perfectly well that these men were upon his track, like bloodhounds, but they were much mistaken in thinking that he was afraid of them. Turning upon them, he asked sternly, " Why do you transgress the commandments of God by your traditions ? The law commands children to care for their parents when they are old and feeble. But your customs allow the undutiful son to pronounce the magic word ' Corban ' over his money and goods, and the priests release him from obligation to support those who cared for him in infancy. Ye hypocrites ! Well did Isaiah say of you, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. You say it is wicked to omit washing the hands before eating bread. I say, that is nothing. But it is wicked in you to allow a son to say

over his property, 'It is a gift to God,' and then hold him guiltless when he leaves his aged father and mother to starve."

These words cut the Pharisees to the heart, and made them angrier than ever. It was a fact that in many such ways their religion had grown to sanction what was cruel and unjust. Some twinges of conscience they must have felt, as this sharp accusation was brought against them, and moreover they had entirely failed in their purpose to show that Jesus was a coward. The result of the interview was, that some of the disciples feared their Master had spoken too boldly. They came to him afterward and asked if he knew that the Pharisees were greatly provoked? He simply answered, "It is of no consequence. They are blind leaders of the blind, and must soon fall into the ditch."

But though Jesus was not at all frightened, he knew that the Pharisees, in their angry mood, might follow him secretly, till they found a chance to kill him; and he judged it better to go entirely away for a time, where they could not find him. So "he went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon."

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XIV.

JESUS IN EXILE.

MATT. xv. 21-28. MARK vii. 24-30.

THE traveller, in the times we are speaking of, as he went northward from Capernaum and passed through the hill country of Galilee, found himself in the Province of Phœnicia,—the two principal cities of which were Tyre and Sidon. The Phœnicians were among the richest and most prosperous of ancient nations, for in all business affairs they were very intelligent. About their morals and their religion we do not know very much. They worshipped idols to some extent, and their laws were not so good as those of the Hebrews.

The Jews both hated and feared the people of Tyre and Sidon. In the days of the Prophet Elijah, the worship of the Phœnician gods had crept in among the people of Israel, and for a time threatened to drive out the worship of Jehovah. Ever since that time the Jews had looked upon this heathen religion with dread. They despised the people of Tyre, as they despised all idolaters ; yet they feared them because their god Baal had once so nearly taken the place of Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews. No Jew of the stricter kind, like the Pharisees, would set foot on Phœnician territory. To them it was a heathen land, upon which the curse of God rested, and they thought God would be angry with them also, if they were found within its borders. Still, many Jews, not so rigid in their belief, had settled in and about Tyre and Sidon, having been drawn thither by the opportunity for trade. Phœnicia furnished Palestine with most of the manufactured articles that were then in use, and Palestine supplied Phœnicia with cattle and wheat.

Into this country Jesus could go and be perfectly safe. Herod could not send his officers there after him, for it was out of his dominions. The Pharisees dared not follow him into a heathen land, for their religion would not allow it, and there, among the Jews settled in the country, he would be sure to find friends. Accordingly, this was the place in which he decided to take refuge. We do not know how far into the country he went, or how long he remained. Probably he continued his journey far enough to be well beyond the frontier, and he may have gone as far as the city of Tyre itself, which was on the shore of the sea. We may suppose also that he was in the country several weeks at least. Palestine was just then in commotion, like a hive of angry bees, and it would take some little time for the excitement to subside, so that Jesus could safely return.

The faith and courage of Jesus must have been sharply tried by this necessity to leave his native land. To everybody except himself and his disciples, it must have seemed that he was entirely beaten by his enemies. It does not appear that he ever doubted or lost heart, however black the prospect before him. But he was perplexed and troubled to know how he should succeed in the great task entrusted to him, though he was certain that, as God had appointed him the Messiah, God would give him the victory at last.

The Pharisees, however, had some reason to think that their plans had succeeded, and that Jesus would never venture to return to Palestine. You will remember that when he began his work in Galilee, he often preached in the Synagogues. But after the Pharisees became openly opposed to him, they soon succeeded in getting these places closed against him. The rulers of the Synagogues were made to believe that he taught false doctrines, and that it was wrong to allow him to take part in their religious services. This exclusion from the usual places of worship and religious instruction created suspicion against him in the minds of the people, and greatly increased the difficulty of gaining their confidence. The Pharisees had provoked a strife between themselves and the followers of Jesus, which entirely prevented a peaceful continuance of his work in Galilee.

Even the life of Jesus was in danger among these enemies, and they thought he would not dare to face their hostility again.

Whether at this time Jesus gave up all hope of going back to Capernaum, we do not know ; but he must have seen that his life there would henceforth be one of constant struggle with the Pharisees. Probably, when he went away he intended to return as soon as the excitement over the death of John had somewhat subsided, and did not fully realize till a little later, that it would be impossible for him to accomplish anything more against the powerful opposition of his enemies. If it had been only a question of preserving his own life, they never would have driven him from the country. But it was a question of life or death for the work he had undertaken, and he could not allow himself to be put to death till the success of his mission as the Messiah was established. The Pharisees doubtless triumphed in their hearts, when Jesus and his twelve faithful disciples had been driven away. He, on his part, had suffered a serious check in his plans and hopes, and had to consider the situation very carefully, though he did not for an instant think of giving up the contest.

Meanwhile, this enforced retirement in a strange land had its decided advantages. Jesus now had more leisure than ever he had found before, to instruct his disciples. We may be sure that he made the most of this opportunity, while there were no Pharisees to dispute with him and no crowd of sick people pressing upon him to be healed. We shall see, presently, that the disciples learned new love and reverence for their Master, during this time when they had him wholly to themselves.

Their life in Phœnicia must have been very quiet. Only one incident of it is told to us, but this fortunately is one that throws a little new light upon the character of Jesus.

A Phœnician woman, near where Jesus was staying, had an insane daughter, or, as it was then said, one who was "vexed with a devil." She learned in some way that the stranger dwelling near her was the great Prophet of Galilee, whose fame had penetrated even to this distant land. She knew how the Jews felt about other nations ; that they looked upon a Phœni-

cian as no better than a dog, upon whom pity and kindness would be wasted. But she believed that Jesus could help her, if he would, and as she loved her daughter, she resolved not to be easily put off with a refusal.

So she watched the house where Jesus was staying, and when he came out with his disciples she followed after him, beseeching him to have mercy upon her, and heal her daughter. He, however, continued on his way as if he did not hear her. But the woman kept on following and crying after him, till finally the disciples added their request that he would take note of her petition. "Send her away," they said, "for she crieth after us." This did not mean "drive her off," but, "give her what she wants and let her go," — as the answer of Jesus shows. He replied to his disciples "But I am only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Now to understand this, we may suppose that Jesus had been talking with his disciples, that very morning, about the mission of the Messiah. He had tried to show them that all nations were to be received into the new kingdom ; while they were inclined to take the old view, that none but Jews were to share the blessings brought by the Messiah. It is plain that the words of Jesus bear reference to something like this, that had gone before. When the woman began to cry after him, he took no notice, because he wanted the sympathies of the disciples to be aroused. Then when they desired him to help the woman, he quoted their own words against them : "How can I help her, if the Messiah is sent only to the Jews?"

As the disciples made no answer, Jesus paused and waited for the woman to come near. She approached and fell down at the feet of Jesus, saying piteously, "Lord, help me." Again Jesus said, more to the disciples than to her, "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to dogs." It was as if he had said to his disciples, "According to your belief about the Messiah, I ought to do nothing for this woman, who is not of our nation."

The disciples did not know what to say ; but the woman was ready with a quick and shrewd answer. "Yea, Lord," she re-

plied, "but even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." The answer pleased Jesus greatly. What he had said implied that she was only a dog, and must not ask for bread, which belonged to the chosen people. She was quick-witted enough to take up his words and say, "Then I only beg for the crumb, which is a dog's portion."

Jesus had great skill in thus turning the words of his opponents against themselves, and he keenly appreciated this apt rejoinder. "For this saying, you shall have what you ask," he said to the woman, and she returned home, we are told, to find her daughter once more in her right mind. Here is a case in which Jesus is said to have healed a person whom he had never seen. We do not understand how he could have done this, and yet we cannot say that such a thing is impossible. Strange cures are sometimes wrought to-day by no other means than prayer and faith; and though we do not know enough about such methods to depend upon them, still it is not beyond the bounds of belief, that the health-giving influence of the faith of Jesus, could reach farther than to those immediately about him.

We have in this incident another example of the ready way in which Jesus seized all occasions to enforce his teaching. It shows us also how free he was from the narrow prejudices of the Jews, who called all other nations Gentiles or Heathen. To him all people were children of God, and he wished all nations of the earth to be gathered into the Kingdom of Heaven, whose foundations God had sent him to establish.

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XV.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

MATT. xvi ; xvii. 1-13. MARK viii ; ix. 1-10. LUKE ix.
18-36.

AFTER spending some time in the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus returned toward Capernaum. On his entrance into Galilee, the people began to assemble joyfully about him once more. But the Pharisees were on the watch, and had lost none of their determination, either to silence or destroy him. They soon met him face to face, and demanded that he should show them some sign from heaven, if he were the Messiah. Jesus knew that they merely wished to lead him on to say something which they could distort into evil. He not only refused to have anything to do with them, but he called them hypocrites ; told them that they were entirely blind to all the signs of the times, which pointed to their own destruction ; and then abruptly turned away from them. There was murder in the thoughts of these men, and he now saw that they would never suffer him to live and go on winning love and respect from the people. His work in Galilee was at an end.

Again he must retire with his little band of followers, and decide what was to be his course in the future. Once more he turned his back upon his native land and went northward ; but this time farther to the East, toward the city of Cæsarea and the sources of the Jordan. This was a beautiful country, lying at the foot of the lofty Mount Hermon. There were cool, shady retreats from the heat of the sun ; mountain brooks, with picturesque cascades ; beautiful temples and statues, erected by the Romans to their gods.

But little of all this could Jesus observe or enjoy. He was busy with his thoughts, and sad thoughts they must have been. He was again a fugitive among strangers, and he knew that among his own people he could never have another moment of safety. What then should he do? Where should he turn? How should he finish the work God had given him to do? We can fancy him upon his wanderings, walking in advance of his disciples with bowed head and sorrowful eyes, thinking, thinking, always thinking about the great task he had undertaken.

At length his way became clear before him, and he formed a great resolve, as we shall see from what he said. When he had determined what to do, he was ready to talk to his disciples. Stopping them by the wayside, he began to question them. "Whom do men say that I am?" They had heard people talk about their Master, and could tell him that some thought he was John the Baptist, risen from the dead; some that he was this or that old prophet come to life again. "But whom do *you* think I am?" he asked, looking keenly into their faces. Simon, the fisherman, answered quickly, "Thou art God's chosen Messiah!"

It was not so much the words themselves, as the way and time in which they were spoken, that carried to the heart of Jesus such joy as he had not known for many a long day. If he had been in Galilee, surrounded by admiring multitudes, the words would not have meant so much. Though he was almost friendless and forsaken, yet his disciples not only kept their faith in him, but had learned to trust and admire him as never before. Looking into the eyes of Simon, he saw that they were full of love and confidence. Simon was not calling Jesus, "the Christ," because others had done so, or merely because he knew what Jesus claimed to be. His words came from his own perfect belief that his Master was the Messiah, and made Jesus feel that here was one heart at least, which knew him as he knew himself.

"Blessed art thou, Simon," he said, "for you say this not because men have told it to you, but because the Father in Heaven hath revealed it to you. Thy name shall be Peter,

which signifies 'a rock,' and upon this 'rock' I will build a church which no powers of evil can overthrow." It was as if a great weight had been suddenly lifted from the heart of Jesus. All his sadness was gone, and he saw victory within his reach.

Have you not sometimes had a dream, in which you thought that a certain message had been given you to deliver to a distant friend? You could not find this friend, and no one would help you. You applied to this one and that one, but nobody would understand what you wanted. All the people seemed to be deaf, or to speak some foreign language. They shook their heads, or paid no attention, when you asked them for assistance. At last, to your great delight, you found one man who listened, and understood the message, and said he would help you to deliver it. Then you felt relieved and happy. For if you did not yourself find the right person, this man would keep on looking, and would interest others, so that the message would be sure to reach its destination at last.

Up to this time Jesus could not be sure that any one had understood him well enough to go on preaching what he had taught, if the Pharisees should kill him. Now he knew that Simon Peter would be true to him, and doubtless the others also gave him assurances of their loyalty. Their wanderings among strangers had not been in vain. The disciples had learned to know their Master better, and as they saw how he bore himself under his reverses, how certain he was, through it all, that God had made him the Messiah, their own belief had grown stronger. When the Pharisees drove him away they thought they were destroying his power. But in reality, this opportunity to make himself known to his disciples was just what he needed, to secure a love which the Pharisees could not steal away.

This new expression of devotion, given by his disciples, made it easier for Jesus to carry out the resolve he had formed. This resolve was, that he would go and preach in Jerusalem, though it was walking to certain death. He would do what he could, during the few days he might have there, to awaken and instruct the people. Then he would allow his enemies to do their

worst, trusting that what he had already accomplished, strengthened by the example of his death, would leave a permanent impression on the minds of his disciples.

Two things were clear to him, — that he must go to Jerusalem, and that he would there be put to death. He would be safe enough in the day-time, when there would always be a large number of his friends about him. But during the night he might easily be arrested and thrown into the Roman prison, whence his friends would be unable to rescue him. So he began to tell his disciples of the purpose he had formed, and what would be the end of it.

But this was something they could not bear to think of. It was not for the Messiah, they supposed, to submit to the evil planned by the Pharisees, but to live and triumph over his enemies. Besides, as they loved their Master, the thought of seeing him suffer, and of having him taken away from them, filled their hearts with pain. Peter therefore tried to persuade Jesus not to go to Jerusalem. "Far be it from thee, Lord," he said; "this trouble must not befall thee."

Peter spoke out of his strong affection, and this made what he said all the harder for Jesus to bear. He did not wish to die while he had yet so much to live for, and his soul shrank back from all the pain that he saw before him. When his dearest friends said, "Live for our sakes," it was hard for Jesus to feel that he must leave them. But he saw that the path God had marked out for him led, through suffering, on to a cruel death. Peter's pleading, though full of affection, was a voice calling him away from God's purpose. Jesus felt this so keenly that he turned his back upon Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan. Thou speakest not the will of God but the wishes of men." We may remark that, as Jesus called a natural and even an innocent wish in Peter's mind by the name of Satan, he meant by that name anything which was contrary to the will of God, and certainly did not believe in a great prince of evil spirits, as many still do.

Jesus understood Peter better than to suppose that he had any wrong intent, and Peter, on second thought, must have been

ashamed of trying to persuade his Master away from what he felt to be his duty. So there was no ill-feeling between them. On the whole, this must have been one of the happiest periods in the life of Jesus with his disciples. He was filled with new hope and confidence in them, and if what he had said of his approaching death saddened their hearts, they doubtless put the matter aside, trusting that it would be somehow averted.

They remained yet some days in the neighborhood of Cæsarea, till after what is called the Transfiguration of Christ had taken place ; and the account of that event fitly closes this part of his life. One night he went upon the mountain to pray, taking with him three of his disciples, and there these disciples saw him talking with two bright angels, whom they took to be Moses and Elijah, while his own face and figure shone with a heavenly light.

This story may symbolize for us the joy and triumph which now filled the heart of Jesus. Whether or no he was seen talking with angels, is not so important for us to know, as that, after a season of trouble and anxiety, he once more heard God clearly speaking in his heart, and saw how he was to accomplish what God required of him.

The traveller, whose road winds among deep valleys and gloomy forests, now and again finds himself upon some sunny hilltop, where for a long distance, before and behind, his path-way can be distinctly traced. Once before, at the time of his baptism, the path of Jesus had brought him into such a high, clear light. Then all the mysterious feelings and whisperings of his heart, during past days, had been made plain, and he saw as by a heavenly radiance, the way marked out for him by the will of God. That event we fixed upon, to mark the completion of one stage of his journey through life.

Afterward Jesus went down into perplexity and trouble, where he could only see his way step by step before him. And now again, he has come where he can see, as if from a mountain top, the path along which his heavenly Guide is leading him. Though in the distance he beholds that cross upon which he is to yield up his life, the prospect does not dismay him. It is

God's decree, and his heart willingly accepts what God has prepared for him.

Here, upon this Mount of Transfiguration, his soul shining with peace and trust, Jesus completes the second part of his sublime pilgrimage.

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PART THIRD.

I.

FAREWELL TO GALILEE.

MATT. xviii. MARK ix. 30-50. LUKE ix. 46-48; xiii. 31-33.

THE ministry in Galilee had come to an end. Driven out of the country once and again by the malignant Pharisees, Jesus saw that it would be useless to try to go on with his labors in the North. But in the South, also, his enemies were numerous and powerful enough to prevent a peaceful continuance of his work.

There remained for him only to live an outcast from his native land, or to enter it and die. To follow the first course would be to desert his mission as the Messiah and to see all his disciples fall away from him. He must go back, at all hazards, to his own people. This decision was easier for him to make, now that he knew the twelve would remain loyal to him after he was taken away, and would proclaim to men the truth he had taught them. He knew, moreover, that his death would endear him still more to the hearts of his disciples, and would fix his sayings more deeply in their minds. "Blessings brighten as they take their flight," says the old proverb. Very often we do not know how precious our treasures have been till we have lost them. Jesus hoped that when he could no longer speak to his disciples, they would more fully appreciate the value of his teachings.

He had left to him, then, only the choice where to die, and he quickly determined that it should be at Jerusalem. If he ended his career in Galilee the people of Jerusalem would look upon him as nothing but a Galilean prophet, and would pay little attention to those who were to go on preaching his gospel. But if he went to the centre and capital of the nation and there boldly proclaimed himself as the Messiah, — though his enemies might kill him, they could not say of his teaching that it came from one unknown and obscure.

Toward Jerusalem, therefore, he turned his steps. From the far northern border, where he had been lately dwelling, he journeyed by the more quiet and less frequented roads into the heart of Galilee once more. Here he wished to stop for a while among his faithful friends in Capernaum. For a short time he could feel reasonably safe, as it would take the Pharisees some days to prepare and carry out any plot against him.

His disciples in Capernaum were no doubt informed of his approach, and came together to receive him. With what joy must they have beheld him once more among them! If he told them that he was on his way to Jerusalem and that he should never look into their faces again, they did not see why it must be so, and did not take the saying much to heart. They had so much reverence for him and such unbounded confidence in his power, that they could not understand why he should allow the Pharisees to put him to death. Probably they thought, notwithstanding all Jesus said, that when he reached Jerusalem he would easily triumph over all opposition, and that most of the people there would love and trust him. If a thing is beautiful in our eyes we are apt to think that it must be beautiful to all the world, and that everybody will prize it as we do. The disciples could not doubt that their beloved Master would make friends everywhere who, if he asked them, would protect him from harm.

But Jesus knew that he must speak to these disciples the last words of counsel they would ever hear from his lips, and he spoke to them with the seriousness and tenderness of one who feels that he is saying a last farewell. The disciples themselves

furnished him with a starting-point for his discourse, for they came to him asking, "who should be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Before answering, Jesus called a little child who was in the company to come to him. Then turning to his disciples he said: "He who makes himself like this little child shall be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."

With the child still upon his knee, or standing by his side, Jesus continued his teaching. He had seen some signs of jealousy among his followers, and he knew that if they began to quarrel as to who should be called greatest, all sorts of evil would grow up in their minds, till they quickly became as bad as the Pharisees. He talked to them long and earnestly about the need of putting out of their hearts all feelings of anger and jealousy. He told them that they must not be always trying to make themselves appear better or richer than their fellows, but must think how they could help others to greater happiness. It was wrong in them, he said, to be careless of the feelings of even the humblest and lowest people. These were the very ones into whose lot they should be most anxious to carry sunshine and joy.

There is something very grand and noble in Christ's chivalrous care for the "little ones" — the weakest and poorest among his followers. He did not tell his disciples, as he was going away from them, to be careful not to offend the influential people who would add strength to their cause. He said, "If you wrong one of these little ones it is the same as wronging me; for I will make their injury my own." Very solemnly he declared, "It were better for a man that he should be cast into the sea with a millstone tied to his neck, than to sin against those who are too weak to defend themselves."

Again he said to them, as he had before, that they were not to answer evil with evil. If any one injured them they should tell him his fault quietly and without anger. Perhaps that would end all strife. But if the wrong-doer would not acknowledge that he had been to blame, they were simply to leave him entirely alone and have no controversy with him.

Then as Jesus looked about upon the few friends who had

believed in him through all his trials, and realized how weak they must sometimes feel themselves beside the haughty and powerful Pharisees, he tried to fill their hearts with a courage that should be equal to their needs. "Fear nothing," he said, "if mighty men threaten to overwhelm you, for their power does not extend beyond this present life, while you have the rewards of heaven before you. And though you are so few as compared with the great world, remember always that while you stand together in my name you have my strength to aid you, and it is as if I myself were with you."

With such words did Jesus take leave of the disciples, who had become very dear to him during his ministry in Galilee. We may hope and believe not only that his words had done them good, but also that he himself was encouraged by this last meeting with them. He must have gone on his way with a lighter heart, feeling sure that these friends whom he left behind would continue true and faithful to his teaching.

What he had said about forgiving those who wronged them seems to have made the deepest impression on their minds; for Peter asked, as soon as Jesus had ceased speaking, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? as many as seven times?" "You shall forgive him seventy and seven times, if need be," replied Jesus; which meant, "You shall forgive always." To enforce this saying, he added a parable about a servant who had been released from a great debt by his master, but who refused to show any mercy to a fellow-servant over whom he had a chance to play the tyrant. The master was angry when he heard how the cruel servant had behaved, and put him in prison to punish him. "So," said Jesus, "shall God make you suffer for your sins unless you learn to be kind and forgiving toward others."

Peter's question having been thus answered, the disciples probably began to disperse. But there was one more episode in this last meeting of Jesus with his Galilean friends. The meeting was intended only for the disciples; and as it had been quietly announced to them there was no gathering of the multitude. But the Pharisees had received word of it, — for their

spies were always on the watch, — and some of them had contrived to be present. They now came to Jesus, bent upon their old purpose of frightening him away. Assuming the tone of friends who were giving a kindly warning, they said, "You must leave this country instantly or Herod will kill you."

Jesus turned upon them with the only contemptuous expression that, to our knowledge, he ever uttered. "Go tell *that fox*, King Herod," he said, "that I cast out devils and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and not until the third day will my work here be finished." Then he added with sharp irony, "I am safe enough at present, for it is only in Jerusalem that they kill prophets."

This was his last encounter with the Pharisees of Galilee, and we see that much as they had injured him, he was still no more afraid of them than at the beginning of his ministry. He saw the dangers about him, and had marked out his own course among them. Not even the name of a king could turn him from his purpose; and we may imagine him sleeping as peacefully that night in Capernaum as if he did not know that he was surrounded by enemies who were thirsting for his life.

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II.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

MATT. xix. MARK x. 1-31. LUKE xviii. 15-30.

WHEN Jesus set forth upon his last journey from Capernaum to Jerusalem, it is probable that he was followed not only by his twelve chosen disciples, but by quite a company of friends, both men and women. Many of his disciples were well-to-do people, who could leave home if they wished, and not a few of them, doubtless, were eager to attend their master on this important journey. They wanted to hear his teachings, and to be of some help to him if the occasion offered. Perhaps also some of them still clung to their old hope, and thought that as the Messiah's kingdom was about to be proclaimed in Jerusalem, they, being the friends of Jesus, would be made great and powerful if they were with him at the time. Jesus had no real need of them, but there was no reason why he should forbid them to go, especially as the feast of the Passover was approaching, when many of them would visit Jerusalem as a matter of course.

By what road Jesus left Galilee, and where it was that he turned back to say a last farewell to the land which held his childhood's home, we cannot certainly say. The Gospel of Luke tells us that he went south from Capernaum by the direct road leading through Samaria, and many incidents are given of his journey through that province. But Luke was not one of the twelve Apostles. He probably was not with Jesus at this time, and there are reasons for thinking that the account given by him is mistaken on this point. Many beautiful parables are told by Luke as if they had been spoken during this journey, and the incidents as related by him are interesting, though not very different from those we have already considered.

It is not necessary to suppose that Jesus went through Samaria on this journey, and we need not go over what is said to have happened there. Probably these things occurred at various other places and times. We may adopt the conclusion which seems to be indicated in the Gospel of Matthew, that Jesus and his friends took the road leading through the country of Peræa, east of the Jordan. This was the longer way to Jerusalem, but it led through a country very thinly inhabited, and Jesus could travel along it much more rapidly than by any other road, for there would be no crowds to delay him. Very likely he left Capernaum by boat, and crossing the lake to the south-eastern shore, there struck into the road extending along the valley of the Jordan on the east side. In summer this road was almost impassable because of the drought and heat. But now, in early spring, though still a lonely, it was quite a pleasant journey along the bank of the river flowing in its deep bed below.

Jesus and his company of disciples were several days upon this journey before they reached the lower Jordan. There turning sharply to the right, they crossed the river and stood upon the soil of Judea. They were now in a thickly settled country, and on the main road leading to Jerusalem through Jericho. Other roads joined this as they proceeded, and at this time each smaller pathway was pouring out into the large highway its throng of festival pilgrims. The presence of Jesus of Nazareth was soon noised abroad, and crowds gathered about him. The people already knew of him as a mighty prophet, whom many believed to be the Messiah, and whom all wished to see and hear for themselves.


The Pharisees of this region had heard of his work in the North, and hated him as did the Pharisees of Galilee. At once they began the old annoyance, — asking him troublesome questions, for the purpose of leading him to say something which would appear wicked to the people. Almost as soon as he entered Judea they were upon him with a question about the marriage laws, expecting at least to get from him an answer which would make him unpopular, and hoping that he would declare himself in opposition to the teachings of their great

Law-giver, Moses. Jesus met them, however, as always, fearlessly and triumphantly, and they do not seem to have accomplished much to his prejudice.

One of the most beautiful and touching events in the life of Jesus occurred at this time. He was surrounded by a multitude, and busily employed in teaching the people. As questions were put to him thick and fast by both enemies and friends, the circle about him pressed closer and closer, through the eagerness of the listeners to hear what was being said. There were women in the throng, — mothers, with their children in their arms, who were not so anxious as the others to hear the Master's words, but who thought that if a man so good and great would put his hands upon their little ones, it would surely bring them a blessing. Little by little they made their way through the crowd till they reached the disciples, who stood next to Jesus to keep the people from pressing upon him too closely. But there the disciples themselves thrust these mothers back. "Do you not see that the Master is busy?" they said. "He cannot be troubled with you now." The quick eye of Jesus saw what was taking place, and he at once turned to the disciples, somewhat displeased with their conduct. "Let the little ones come, and forbid them not," he said, "for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Then as the mothers came forward, he smilingly and lovingly took the children one by one, put his hands upon them and asked God to bless them.

It is certain that Jesus was very fond of children, and they must have been fond of him. His grave and gentle manner easily won their confidence, and they felt, as quickly as any one, the great wealth of love that was in his look and in the tones of his voice. Jesus was truly the friend of children; and the charm of his presence so lingers in the story of his life that all children who read it understandingly are sure to wish they might have seen him.

Not long afterward, as Jesus was continuing his journey, a young man came and knelt before him, saying, "Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus saw from his dress and manner that he possessed wealth



and high social position. He saw in the question, also, a false idea held by most of the Pharisees, that one could reach heaven simply by doing something very difficult. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," he replied. "But what commandments?" said the young man. "The commandments given of old," answered Jesus, — "Thou shalt not kill, or steal, or bear false witness, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "All these commandments I have kept from my youth up," said the young man, confidently. Had he, indeed? Jesus had told his disciples that the law against murder required them to put out of their hearts every trace of the murderer's feelings of hatred and revenge. In no such strict manner as that had this young man kept the commandments, or he would not now be troubled by a feeling that he had not done enough to win heaven.

"What lack I yet?" the questioner continued, as the Master paused, considering what he should say. Perhaps Jesus was thinking to himself, "This young man wishes me to give him some hard task to perform, and he supposes that he is ready to do whatever I tell him. Let us see if he is really as heroic as he esteems himself." Earnestly regarding the young man, to watch the effect of his words, Jesus said: "If you will be perfect, go and sell all your property and give the money to the poor. Then come and follow me." It was a hard test to apply, — too hard for the young man's virtue. After all, he did not want to pay quite so much for the gift of eternal life, and he went away "very sorrowful."

Jesus did not care whether people were rich or poor. He wanted them to be sincere, honest with themselves, and to seek heaven not only by doing, but by being good. This young man thought himself sufficiently brave and noble, and that he only needed to find the right thing to do. Jesus had taken just the means to show him that his heart was not perfect, for he cared more for his riches than for the Kingdom of God.

After the young man had gone, Jesus said to his disciples, sadly, "How hard it seems for rich people to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; as hard as for a camel to go through the eye of a

needle," he continued, quoting what was probably an Eastern proverb. The disciples were somewhat appalled at this, for many of them were far from poor. "Who then can be saved?" they exclaimed. But Jesus, not caring to pursue the subject farther, merely answered, "With God all things are possible." He wanted his disciples to feel what is undoubtedly true, that people of wealth easily care too much for their earthly riches, and must be careful not to value them more than the treasures of heaven.

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III.

THE LAST JOURNEY (*Continued*).

MATT. xx. 17-34. MARK x. 32-52. LUKE xviii. 31-43.

WHEN Jesus left Galilee he knew perfectly well what fate awaited him in Jerusalem, and the journey was saddened for him by thoughts of the coming separation from those he loved. His disciples, however, notwithstanding all he had said to them, were cherishing bright and hopeful anticipations, and no cloud of coming sorrow lay upon their spirits. They knew that their Master had many enemies ; but did he not also possess hosts of friends ? If he needed protection from danger these friends would stand between him and the malice of his foes. Moreover, the power of God was so plainly with him ; he had done such wonderful things, and had so easily foiled the plots of the Pharisees hitherto, how could they doubt that he would triumph over all opposition in Jerusalem ?

It was all the harder for them to remember what Jesus had said of his approaching death, because all things surrounding them were full of joy. It was the springtime of the year, when nature speaks to the mind of hope ; it was a festival season, and the people whom the disciples met upon the road were gay and happy. It was but natural that they also should catch the holiday feeling, and, if they thought at all of the sad warning their Master had given them, should dismiss it from their minds as nothing but a gloomy fancy which he had uttered in a moment of weariness or discouragement.

Jesus did not wish to make them unhappy, but, knowing that a great trial was before them, he wanted to prepare their minds for it, so that they should not be overwhelmed by disappointment when it came. He saw that they did not really believe his life was to be so soon ended, and he feared that they might

lose courage to do the work he expected of them after he was gone if his death fell upon them as an unexpected blow. Once more, therefore, as they were travelling on, and were drawing near the city of Jericho, Jesus called the twelve apart to tell them what the end of this journey was to be. "It will not be as you think," he said, "that I shall silence all my enemies and live in Jerusalem as the great Messiah in splendor and power. On the contrary, I shall be arrested by the priests, who will condemn me to death, and give me up to the Romans to be crucified."

We can hardly imagine that these words made no impression upon the minds of the disciples. They must have felt at the time, from the seriousness and solemnity of their Master's manner, that he was declaring to them something more than his fears as to what might happen. And yet, here were the crowds of people, all friendly to Jesus. He moved among them, as at first in Galilee, winning universal love and reverence. Why should he allow himself to be killed, when all things were going so prosperously? They returned to their hope that, once in Jerusalem, Jesus would be swept on to complete victory by the affection of the people, and soon rose above the sadness that his words had left in their hearts.

Before they reached Jericho, however, the disciples were dreaming again of fame and glory almost within their reach. They had given up their early expectation of war and tumult, during which the Messiah was to put all his enemies to the sword, and out of which he was to come a victorious earthly king. But though they looked forward to the establishment of a kingdom of peace, they thought all men would bow before the Messiah, and that they, as his nearest friends, would share in the honors soon to be heaped upon him. This was the glorious future which seemed to lie just before them. They were so certain about it that at times they were jealous of each other. Some of them wanted to stand highest in their Master's love, so that they might have, next to him, the largest share of glory when he became the greatest man in the nation. In addition to other causes for sorrow, Jesus had now to see this spirit of rivalry

break out among his followers, during the very day on which he had endeavored to prepare them for coming affliction and trial.

Among his Galilean friends who attended him on this journey, was Salome, the mother of James and John who were two of the twelve disciples. She was ambitious for her sons and wished them to be considered foremost among the disciples. Perhaps it was she who put it into their heads to try to get some promise from Jesus that they should have the first place of honor when he became the acknowledged Messiah. They did not quite like to make such a request themselves, and either asked their mother, or she volunteered, to speak for them.

So the three came to Jesus, and Salome, kneeling down, besought him to grant her a favor. "What would you have?" Jesus asked. "Grant, Lord," she said, "that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." Jesus looked at James and John in astonishment, to see if they joined in their mother's request. Perceiving from their looks that she had spoken their wish, he answered, quite as much in pity as by way of rebuke, "Ye know not what ye ask." There they stood, cherishing bright visions of advancement to high stations of glory and renown, picturing to themselves a future in which all men should look up to them as trusted friends of the great Messiah; and he saw before them a lifetime of persecution, during which, not pleasures and honors, but hardship and scorn should be their portion. And they wanted to stand next to him when the triumph was won, having not the remotest conception of the suffering and labor which that triumph would cost!

"Can ye drink of the bitter cup that I must drink?" said Jesus. "Can ye bear the baptism of sorrow that I must endure?" And they answered, cheerfully and confidently, "We can." No doubt they were firmly resolved to deserve the favor which they hoped Jesus would grant them. We may believe that looking into their eyes their Master saw the light of a strong courage and resolution mingled with the gleams of an eager ambition. He thought, too, of the troubles and

perils which in after years would put their courage to the severest test, and answered them gently : " Ye shall indeed drink the cup of suffering with me, and like me ye shall be baptized with sorrow. But places of honor in the Kingdom of God are not at my bestowal. They shall be given by our Father in Heaven to those who prove worthy of them in doing His will."

In some way the other ten disciples soon heard what had passed at this interview. Perhaps the mother of James and John was encouraged by the gentle manner of Jesus to believe that he did really care most for her sons, and boasted of what had occurred. At all events, it was soon known that these two had endeavored to get themselves set over their brethren, and the rest of the disciples were justly indignant. Jesus had to quiet the quarrel which thus arose, and he did it in a characteristic manner. Instead of denouncing the conduct of James and John, he made their action appear to the others weak and foolish. " They think," he said, " as ignorant people who try to make themselves great are apt to think, that if they can only be appointed to high stations all the world will respect them. But you should see that the only way to win from others honor and esteem is to do something great and noble." Thus he turned the anger that the ten had felt toward James and John into pity, that they should have shown so poor an understanding of the true path to greatness, and made the two brothers more ashamed than if he had severely blamed them. At the same time he taught them all a lofty and important truth, which we cannot too carefully remember.

Taking up their journey again, Jesus and his disciples soon entered Jericho. They probably remained here some little time for rest and refreshment. It is said that Jesus was entertained in the house of Zaccheus, a rich publican. It is not probable that he found much rest, however, for we are led to suppose that the whole city was greatly excited by his presence, and that during the time of his stay he made many devoted friends. Some of these new friends joined his disciples when they left the place, and helped to swell the throng which attended him.

triumphantly through the gates of Jerusalem. The next step of the narrative will take us, with this throng, into the Holy City.

REFERENCES.

Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. v. pp. 47-64; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. chap. xlviii.; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. chap. liv. pp. 381-392; "Bible for Young People," vol. v. chap. xxviii.

IV.

THE ENTRY TO JERUSALEM.

MATT. xxi. 1-16. MARK xi. 1-11, 15-19. LUKE xix. 28-46.
JOHN xii. 12-19.

THE road from Jericho to Jerusalem is steep, wild, and rocky. Winding among desolate hills and through gloomy valleys, it leads up from the low lands of the Jordan to the mountain region in which Jerusalem is situated. It was here, where robbers made their dens, that Jesus fixed the scene of his parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30). Along this road, one morning in April, travelled Jesus and his disciples, making the rocks by the wayside echo with their busy talk.

It was a joyous company ; for the disciples and the people who had joined them on the way were expecting that Jesus would soon put forth his wonderful powers to the utmost. Even Jesus, though he saw that he could not much longer continue his work peacefully, and could only escape the fate his enemies had prepared for him by resorting to strife and bloodshed, must have felt his heart lightened by the affection and reverence that the people manifested toward him. It must have been a source of satisfaction to him that there was power in his hands if he cared to use it. The strong man may not wish to strike, but he likes to feel that he could deliver a telling blow if he should undertake it. Jesus did not refuse to fight because he was afraid of being beaten, but because fighting would not help on the cause of peace ; and, knowing that the Pharisees accused him of cowardice, he felt some pride in the strength which his command of the people gave him.

On the eastern side of Jerusalem rises a high hill, called the Mount of Olives, which completely hides the city from those who approach it by the road Jesus was travelling, till they have

climbed almost to its summit. Then, as the road makes a sudden turn about a shoulder of the hill, the traveller finds himself at the top of a sharp descent, with Jerusalem almost under his feet. The road winds down the steep hillside, crosses a narrow ravine through which flows the brook Kedron, and disappears through one of the gates by which the walls of the city are pierced.

After his long and toilsome journey, now almost finished, the traveller, who has reached the crest of the Mount of Olives, naturally pauses to rest and enjoy the scene spread out before him. So, we may suppose, Jesus and his company halted, when they arrived at this spot. As the disciples gazed upon the historic city, their joyful anticipations, already strongly aroused, rose to a higher feeling of certainty. Was there not one standing among them the Messiah foretold by the Prophets, who had power to enthrone himself in yonder sacred Temple, as the nation's King? To their excited imaginations it seemed as if this great event were about to take place; and as the promised happiness and glory of the Messiah's reign rose before their minds, their emotion broke forth in triumphant shouts, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Jesus did not rebuke the joy of his disciples. Doubtless, for the moment, the dark shadow of the cross was lifted from his heart, and the feeling of triumph which filled the minds of those about him turned his thoughts away from the conflict that awaited him. He was about to enter the city, — not as a hunted fugitive, or even as a poor, powerless Rabbi, but as the leader of a mighty host. He was willing to show the proud Pharisees that it was not lack of ability, but fidelity to his own purpose, that prevented him from meeting them, strength for strength and blow for blow. He would have no bloody tumult in the streets of Jerusalem. But if his enemies hated him, they should not also despise him; for he would yield to the wishes of his followers, so far as to adopt something of the state of a conqueror, and would make it plain that he could cause tumult enough if he wished.

No horses were known in that country, save such as were employed to drag chariots of war. The donkey was the animal everywhere in use and was often quite a handsome creature. A donkey was soon found ; a cushion of clothes was made in place of a saddle, and Jesus was seated upon it. Then, surrounded by the disciples who were chanting their "Hosannas" in loud chorus, and spreading their garments in the way to make for him a carpet over which to ride, Jesus began the descent of the Mount of Olives. The sounds of rejoicing were heard within the city, and people began to come out to meet the advancing throng. They stripped branches from the trees and waved them in the air or scattered them in the road before Jesus, as he rode onward, while louder and louder rose the strain, as it was taken up by new voices, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord !"

Over the bridge by which the Kedron is spanned, up the smaller hill on its western side, and through the city gates, marched the triumphant band. Inside, the people began to run together to learn the cause of the unusual commotion. "What does it mean ? Who is this ?" they asked. And the disciples answered proudly, "This is the Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth." As the multitude pressed on through the narrow streets, a few Pharisees were swept into the train, and carried along against their will. They cried out to Jesus, angrily, "Teacher, silence thy followers !" But Jesus only answered with a quotation from the Prophets, "I tell you if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out."

Turning to the left, Jesus led his disciples southward, directly toward the Temple. When he arrived before the lofty front, its spotless marble pillars and ornaments of gold were glittering in the afternoon sun. Here he dismounted and led the way up a broad flight of steps into the first enclosure, commonly called the "Court of the Gentiles." This was open to the people of all nations ; but beyond, where another flight of steps led to the inner temple, were two columns bearing an inscription which warned back all save Jews from the "Holy Place," on pain of death.

In the middle of this "Court of the Gentiles," Jesus paused. It was by itself a large and magnificent building. Its floor was a broad, smooth pavement of various colored stones, and it was surrounded by double rows of marble columns, which upheld a cedar roof. Well suited was this beautiful place for the worship of God. But as Jesus stood there no sounds of devotion reached his ear. He heard instead the bleating of animals, the clinking of money, and the noise of a busy traffic. For all the cloisters, or spaces between the columns, were filled at this time with merchants and money-changers, who grew rich by exchanging Jewish for foreign coins, and selling the doves and sheep which were to be offered in sacrifice at the approaching feast. This business should have been carried on outside the Temple. But the priests, who cared little for the purity of their religion, had suffered it to enter the walls of the sacred edifice, and to usurp the only place in which people not Jews could go to offer their prayers.

As Jesus stood at the head of his followers looking upon this scene, it is probable that he attracted the attention of the buyers and sellers, and that gradually their bargaining ceased, till they were all silently regarding him. They read authority and displeasure in his looks ; and when he advanced upon them with flashing eyes and extended arm, saying, "Take these things hence ! It is written that the house of God shall be a house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves,"—they fled before him like their own frightened sheep. If any lingered, and thought for a moment of standing their ground, a glimpse at the determined faces of the disciples, pressing close behind their Master, was enough to destroy all purpose of resistance. The money-changers hastily gathered up their piles of gold and silver ; their tables were overturned ; the cages of doves were caught up by their owners ; and, in a confused mass, men and animals poured out of the Temple area before the indignation that pursued them.

We cannot help being glad that Jesus thus gave way, once, to his anger against wrong ; for it shows us that his customary calm and reserved bearing came from his strength of will, not

from a cold nature. We do not respect the man who is incapable of being made angry. We admire the self-control which keeps down passionate feelings, and yet we like to see a fiery earnestness sometimes breaking through a quiet manner, because that proves the usual self-control to be real and strong.

No doubt this bold action on the part of Jesus increased the bitterness of his foes. But however the Pharisees might hate him, they could not after this day speak of him as a mere nobody. He had shown them that the people were ready to welcome and believe in him, by leading through the streets of Jerusalem a great number of enthusiastic disciples. He had taken upon himself authority to purify the Temple, and had, for the time being, made himself master of that sacred building. Henceforth men must think of him, not only in connection with his works of teaching and healing, but as one who had manifested something of the Messiah's power to lead and command.

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Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. v. pp. 65-131; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. chap. xlix. ; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. chap. lv. pp. 393-404; "Bible for Young People," vol. vi. chap. xxix.

V.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

MATT. **xxi.** 23-46. MARK **xi.** 27-33 ; **xii.** 1-12. LUKE **xx.** 1-19.

AFTER the exciting scenes which had marked his first day in Jerusalem, Jesus withdrew at night to the village of Bethany, which was on the other side of the Mount of Olives, and only a little more than a mile from the city. Here, in the house of friends, he found the repose that he needed after the fatigues of the day, and in view of the labors of the morrow.

Early the next morning, however, he returned to the Temple and probably found its large courts already well filled with people who had come there to hear him speak. Tidings of what occurred the day before had quickly spread throughout the city, and the people rightly judged that so fearless a prophet would be found in the most open and public place. "Many believed on him," as they listened to his teaching. Even those who had been drawn thither by nothing more than idle curiosity, found their hearts moved and their better thoughts awakened by his words, as by no voice they had ever heard before. Jesus did not meet the expectation of his disciples that he would proclaim himself to be the Messiah. He still held to the course he had followed from the first, and waited for others to discover, by his speech and bearing, that he was "one sent from God." If he had been left in peace by the rulers of the city, the common people who always "heard him gladly," would have become his disciples in great numbers.

But the priests, who had charge of the Temple and carried on the religious services, were very much angered and alarmed

by what was going forward. The day previous, Jesus had suddenly appeared among them with his followers, and in utter disregard of their authority had cast out of the Temple those whom they permitted to do business there. Now, the crowds which had gathered to see and hear him blocked up the outer courts of the sacred building, while the Temple services were but thinly attended. The priests felt much like a man into whose house a stranger has entered and made himself perfectly at home. They could not submit tamely to the affront that had been put upon them, and they resolved to make the intruder feel the weight of their power.

Their plan was to send some of their number, wearing their robes of office, to confront Jesus before the people and demand of him what authority he had for the acts he had committed. They knew that he was no priest, had not been elected or appointed to any office in the city or nation, and had not even received that license from the schools without which no one was permitted to teach. If he acknowledged this publicly, they hoped the people would turn against him and call him an impostor. If on the other hand he claimed to have authority from God, then he might be arrested for blasphemy. In either case, they thought they should triumph over him.

So these priests thrust their way through the crowd, stopped Jesus in his teaching, and asked their question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Jesus was not at all troubled by this demand, and was perhaps somewhat amused that they should try to catch him by so shallow a device. He replied at once, "I also will ask you a question, and if you answer it, I will tell you who gave me my authority. Whence did John have the right to baptize? Did it come from Heaven or from men?"

This question completely upset the scheme of the priests. Instead of convicting him of evil, they were themselves put on the defensive. They did not believe that John had any right to baptize,—for they thought that none but priests should be allowed to perform a religious ceremony,—but they dared not say so, for that would anger the people, who held John to be a

great prophet. If on the other hand they answered that God gave John the right to baptize, then Jesus might claim the same right to speak and act as one who had received power from Heaven. The poor priests could not answer either way, and so they said, weakly, "We cannot tell." "Neither will I tell you," said Jesus, with some note of disdain in his voice, "by what authority I do these things."

But the priests were not to be let off, even with the failure of their plot. They were hemmed in by the people pressing closely together, so that they could not well get away without loss of dignity, and were obliged to stand and listen to two parables, in which they were held up to public scorn. "What think ye!" said Jesus, addressing the multitude. "A certain man had two sons. To one of them he said 'Go work to-day in my vineyard.' And though the son answered, 'I will not!' yet he afterwards repented and went. To the other son, he gave the same command; but this one promised obedience and never went near the vineyard. Which of them did the will of his father?" All the people answered, "The first."

Then Jesus turned sternly upon the priests, and they might have fancied for the moment that it was John speaking to them again. "Verily I say unto you, the publicans and the worst of sinners go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you; they repented at the preaching of John, and did the will of God. You are always ready to say that you will obey God's commands, but you do not fulfil your promises."

This was bold and stern language to use toward men who thought they stood nearer to Heaven than any one else. But they richly deserved all that Jesus said of them, for their religion consisted wholly in the practice of ceremonies, and they neither cared for nor taught any real purity of life. Considering themselves, however, the appointed agents of God, it must have cut to the quick, to hear Jesus rank them below sinners whom they despised, and to read sympathy with his words in the faces of the people.

Not even yet were these priests, who in an unlucky hour had put themselves forward to attack Jesus, suffered to depart.

"Hear another parable," he continued. "There was a certain householder, who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of harvest came, he sent his servants to collect the rent. But the husbandmen would not pay it; they beat the servants, and killed one of them. Again the owner of the vineyard sent other servants, and they were received in the same manner. Then at last he sent his son, thinking surely the husbandmen would not dare to abuse him. But the wicked men said, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him and seize the vineyard for our own.' So they caught him and slew him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do to those husbandmen?" The people answered, "He will destroy them and let out the vineyard to others, who will pay him the rent."

The meaning of the parable was plain. The priests and Pharisees were the husbandmen, who would not receive those whom God had sent; Jesus himself was the son, whom they were seeking to kill. In this indirect way, he declared himself the Messiah, and the disciples probably hailed his words with glad shouts. But Jesus did not leave his meaning to be guessed. "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you," he said, facing the priests, "and shall be given to those who will bring forth its fruits. Did ye never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner'? Take heed to yourselves! For whoever falls on this stone shall be bruised, and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." "You reject me," Jesus meant, "but I shall triumph through the power of God, and you who oppose me will certainly be crushed."

There were Pharisees in the throng, and they, like the priests, were beside themselves with rage when they heard these sayings. They rushed forward with angry cries, like that assembly in Nazareth, and would have dragged Jesus from the Temple. But he was surrounded at this time by numerous friends, and his assailants found so many strong arms interposed for his protection, that they were forced to draw back.

With this scene, the second day's work in Jerusalem seems to have come to an end. It is probable that during the tumult Jesus quietly moved away, and went to spend the night with his friends in Bethany. Meanwhile the enraged priests and Pharisees were busy planning how they might entrap him on the morrow.

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Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. v. pp. 132-155; Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. chap. l. pp. 217-225; Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. chap. lv. pp. 405-412; "Bible for Young People," chap. xxx.

VI.

FAREWELL TO THE TEMPLE.

MATT. xxii. 15-46 ; xxiii. MARK xii. 13-40. LUKE xx. 20-47.

WE have seen how the Jews were divided into various parties which felt toward each other almost a deadly hatred. But as in the presence of a common danger the worst of enemies will become friends for the time being, so now the leaders of the Jewish sects, when they saw that the people were more and more disposed to receive Jesus as the Messiah, laid aside their ancient feuds, and banded together to destroy this new rival, whose growing power threatened them all alike. Think what an unequal match it was ! Almost all the great and rich and learned of the nation were against this one man, who had no friends in high station, and nothing with which to oppose their malice save his strong love, his keen intelligence, and power to speak the truth.

No doubt the Scribes and Pharisees honestly thought that Jesus was not the true Messiah ; what he taught was so different from their own ideas that he really seemed to them a wicked man. But, after all, the deeper cause of their hatred was their fear that Jesus would draw away from them the respect of the people. If he was allowed to continue his course, their influence would soon be entirely lost. They saw that they must act together, and that their measures must be prompt and vigorous.

But before they could arrest Jesus, they must have some charge to bring against him, and, if possible, they wanted to find him guilty of an offence that could be punished with death. Such a crime would be that of speaking against the Roman emperor. After consulting together, the leaders determined

that the best thing was to draw him on to say something that could be called treason against the Emperor, Cæsar. Then they could hand him over to Pilate, the Roman Governor, who would soon put him out of the way. Or, what would suit their purposes almost as well, suppose that he were to speak some word of friendliness for the Roman power; then the people would despise him, and would not listen to the claim of his disciples, that he was the Messiah.

To make their plan more sure of success, they put forward some of the more obscure members of their party, so that neither Jesus nor those about him might suspect the intent of the question they meant to ask. When Jesus appeared again in the Temple, these men mingled with the listeners who gathered about him, as if they too were there to be instructed. It was not at all uncommon for people to ask questions of him during his teaching, and when there was a little pause these men claimed his attention. "Master," said one of them, "we know that thou teachest the way of God, and speakest the truth without fear. Tell us, therefore, is it right that we should pay tribute to Cæsar?"

The question seemed natural enough, but Jesus detected at once the subtle flattery by which his enemies had thought to blind him. "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" he said. "Show me the tribute money." Some one handed him the hateful Roman coin, bearing on one side the face of the Emperor. "Whose image is this?" said he, holding up the coin. "It is Cæsar's," they replied. And then, as they bent forward, expecting to hear either some cowardly response or a fierce denunciation of the foreign tyrant who compelled them to pay tribute, Jesus said, quietly but impressively, "Give therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and render to God the things that belong to God." The Pharisees looked blankly into each other's faces. There was nothing more to be said. They had sprung their trap, and it had caught nothing at all.

Let us note that it was no mere wary and foxlike cunning that Jesus here displayed. He escaped from the snare that was laid for him, not as a weasel slips out of the little hole left in

the hunter's net, but as a lion might walk straight through the walls of the flimsy pen prepared for him. The answer given by Jesus was no evasion of the difficulty presented to him, but was another expression of the command he always tried to enforce, *viz.*, "Let outward things remain as they are, and strive to build up a kingdom of love and purity within the heart."

The first plan of the conspirators having broken down, the Sadducees, who did not believe in a future life, undertook to puzzle Jesus with such questions about the next world as they had used in their disputes with the Pharisees. But they were speedily put to silence by his answers. Then the Pharisees once more tried to provoke him to speak some hasty word about the religious law. They instructed one of the scribes to ask him "what was the greatest commandment?" thinking, perhaps, that this would lead him to speak slightly of some of their sacred customs. Jesus answered, at once, "The first commandment is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' The second is, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' On these two commandments all the law is established." The Scribe could only murmur, "Thou hast answered well, Master." He had indeed spoken well; for that was a great day in the life of the world when it was announced to men that, better than any priest or written rule, love would teach them their duties toward God and each other.

And now it was Jesus' turn to ask a question. He saw his enemies standing about in groups and whispering together, — baffled, but still full of rage and spite, — while the people looked on to see what would happen next. "What think ye of the Messiah?" he demanded of his assailants; "whose son is he?" "He is the son of David," some one answered. "How, then, if he is David's son, does David speak of the Messiah as his Lord?" asked Jesus. This was, perhaps, to show them that the Messiah was much more than the son of David, and had a far greater mission than to restore the earthly throne of his kingly ancestor. They could not answer the question, and their silence before the people was a confession that they were beaten at every point.

The heart of Jesus began to swell with indignation as he thought of the relentless way in which these men and others of their party had followed him throughout his ministry, and how many of his attempts to do good they had brought to nought. He turned once more to the people, to tell them in plain terms what they were to think of these Scribes and Pharisees. But as he spoke, his noble anger mounted higher, and he ended by hurling directly at the heads of his adversaries one of the most scathing denunciations ever uttered: —

“The Scribes and Pharisees give to you the commandments of Moses,” he said; “therefore their commandments are to be obeyed. But do not follow their example, for they practise not their own teachings. They bind heavy burdens upon the shoulders of men, and will not themselves so much as raise a finger to lift the load of their fellows. They have no love for what is in itself good and true, but only do right that men may speak well of them. They care nothing for the people, and have no feeling that others are their brethren; but think only of getting for themselves the best things and the highest places.”

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees!” Jesus said, addressing them as their rightful judge, “for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men. Ye compass sea and land to make one convert, and then ye make him only a child of hell. Woe unto you, hypocrites! who make a great virtue of paying to the priests tithes of your petty garden herbs, and neglect judgment, mercy, and faith. Ye blind guides, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you! for you are like whitened sepulchres, and though you appear righteous outwardly, you are full of iniquity within. Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you build the tombs of the prophets, and are the sons of those who have killed the righteous! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!”

How the men to whom these terrible words were spoken must have quailed under them, and shrunk from the fire that flashed in the eyes of Jesus, as if it had been lightning from heaven!

Strong emotions are often subject to rapid changes ; and as Jesus paused for an instant, the tide of his feeling suddenly turned from anger to grief. It was the last time he should stand as teacher in the Temple courts; and he had longed to win a full hearing for that message he had brought from God, which would have saved the great city from coming evils. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he cried, "thou that killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy people together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

As he turned to leave the place, the crowd fell apart to let him pass ; and we may imagine that there were tears in his eyes as he walked away, realizing that never again would he raise his voice to address an audience of the people.

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VII.

JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

MATT. xxiv., xxv. MARK xii. 41-44; xiii. LUKE xxi.

As Jesus was leaving the Temple, after the occurrences told in the last chapter, he crossed what was called the "Court of the Women," and for some reason paused a little under the shadow of the marble columns by which it was surrounded. Perhaps some of his disciples were slow in making their way out of the crowd, and he was waiting for them to overtake him. In this "Court of the Women" there were several large metal boxes into which the people, as they came and went, dropped their contributions for the support of various charitable objects.

Jesus stood watching those who came up to one of these boxes. The rich Pharisees opened their well-filled purses and, selecting some large coin, dropped it into the box, where it fell with a loud ring, as if calling public attention to the giver's wealth. Among the the rest came a woman, poorly clad, and wearing the dress of a widow. She drew from her purse all that it contained, — two small pieces of money that would not together equal a half-penny, — and shyly slipped them into the mouth of the box. "Did you see that widow?" said Jesus to his disciples, as she turned away. "Truly, she has given more than all the rest; for they have only cast in a little part of their great wealth, while she has given all that she possessed, and left herself nothing with which to buy food."

Jesus meant, of course, that it was more for her to give her mite than for the rich people to give their larger sums, whose loss they would never feel. In the sight of God she had done better than they. It was a truth which he often illustrated in his parables, that, in judging us, God will look not only at what

we have done, but at the means we have had to do with. And this is a thought we need to keep in mind. For if none could please Him save those who perform the very noblest deeds, — like the brave men who rescue others from drowning at the peril of their own lives, — what hope would there be for us, to whom no chance for such heroic action is given? God will be satisfied if we do the best we can; and it is better to be entirely faithful with our small abilities than to have great gifts and only partly use them in good work.

The companions of Jesus having by this time gathered about him, they passed out of the Temple and took the road toward Bethany. After they had crossed the narrow valley of the Kedron, beyond the city walls, they turned to look at the Temple, which to a person standing there presented the most imposing view to be had of it from any point. Standing as it did upon the summit of a hill, its white mass towered high above them, resplendent in its many gilded ornaments. So huge and strong it looked that it seemed built to stand forever. As the disciples gazed upon it they could not help exclaiming, "What a magnificent building!" "See, Master," they said, "what a wonderful and enormous pile of stones it is!" But Jesus was in no mood to share their raptures. "I see," he replied, briefly. "But before many years have passed it will be wholly destroyed, so that not one single stone shall be left standing on another."

These words excited the wonder of the disciples, and as they continued on their way, they whispered together concerning their Master's meaning. He had spoken repeatedly about some great calamity that was soon to fall upon the nation, and had given them to understand that there must be an interval of sorrow and gloom before the Messiah's reign of joy and love could begin. They had not thought much of these sayings before, but now they remembered how often Jesus had spoken sadly concerning the future. So when he stopped to rest, part way up the steep ascent of the Mount of Olives, they asked him, "Master, when shall these things come to pass? By what sign shall we know when such events are near, and how soon may we expect the Messiah's triumph?"

Jesus seated himself upon the grass and began to talk to them about the future. What he is reported to have said at this time it is very difficult for us to fully understand. But we need not now try for anything more than the general meaning of his words, and that is within easy reach. We may liken him to one of a company floating down the current of a deep, swift river, who hears the low thunder of the distant cataract, though as yet it is inaudible to his companions. They see only the smooth surface of the stream that bears them along, and hear nothing but its pleasant ripple mingled with the sound of their own voices. But he knows that they are being drawn to the brink of the fall by a force from whose power it will be too late to escape when they become aware of the danger.

Jesus saw that affairs were hurrying on to a great catastrophe. His keener sense discerned the "signs of the times," which told him that the life of the nation must soon encounter deadly perils. In fact, it was not many years afterward that a war arose, during which Jerusalem was captured and destroyed by a Roman army. The Temple was thrown down and plundered of all its treasure, so that never afterward did a Hebrew priest offer sacrifice there, or perform any of the rites of his ancient religion on the spot which had long been its sacred home. The Jewish people, who had been dreaming of ruling the world from their Holy City, were scattered over the face of the earth, to remain till this day a people without a country of their own.

How much of all this Jesus foresaw, it is impossible to determine. But it is certain that he knew something of the evils and troubles to come, and did not expect his cause to triumph till they had passed by. The plunge over the cataract must be taken by all,—his followers among the rest. But, if they remained faithful to his teachings, whatever else might perish, the Kingdom of Heaven which he had preached would go through the trial in safety.

"There will be wars and rumors of wars," said Jesus, in answering the question of his disciples. "Kingdom shall rise against kingdom, and nation against nation. There will be earthquake, and famine, and pestilence in many places. Here

in Judea there will be such sorrow as was never known before. Desolation shall reign even in the "holy place" of the Temple. At that time let him that is on the plain flee to the mountains for safety, and let not him that is in the field return home to prepare himself for flight. Then shall arise false prophets and false Messiahs, by whom many shall be deceived. But if they say to you, 'Lo, here is Christ,' or 'there,' believe it not. If they say, 'Behold, he is in the desert,' go not forth; 'Behold, he is in the secret chambers,' believe it not. For when the time is fulfilled, the coming of the Kingdom will be like the lightning, which shineth out of the east even unto the west.

"But the exact day when all this shall take place no man knoweth. It is not known even to the Messiah, but only to God in heaven. And because I cannot tell you how long the season of waiting will be, you must watch, as if the day of the Lord were a thief against whom you were guarding your house. Be ye always ready, — like a wise servant who has been left in charge of a household, and who keeps all things prepared for his master's return. If this servant were to become careless and drunken, and should begin to beat the servants who had been placed under him, the master might come in an unexpected hour, and would punish him for his negligence. Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

We gather from these words that Jesus saw before his people a time of tumult and destruction, during which his cause would make but little progress. He had planted a seed, and the seed had taken root; but the lingering frosts and long, cold storms of spring must be endured before the coming of that summer in which his Gospel could fully put forth its power of growth. This shows us how soberly and accurately Jesus judged the course of events, and how far he was from being carried away by his hopes or fancies. At that time there were only a few who believed that he had brought a message from God, and these few suffered many bitter persecutions before they gained headway against the world's unbelief. But the time came when the name of Christ was carried abroad over the

earth, and the influence of his teachings spread even "as the lightning, which shineth out of the east unto the west."

To enforce and illustrate what had been said, two beautiful parables are given in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, which all should read. After the discourse was finished, Jesus continued his way to Bethany, there to await among friends "the beginning of the end"

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VIII.

THE LAST SUPPER.

MATT. xxvi. 1-29 ; MARK xiv. 1-25 ; LUKE xxii. 1-30 ; JOHN xiii. and xiv. ; 1 COR. xi. 23-26.

AFTER his departure from the Temple and the discourse on the Mount of Olives, Jesus remained for some days with his friends in Bethany. During this time, the priests in the city were considering how they might get him into their power. When he appeared in public he was surrounded by so many friends that they could not arrest him without having a pitched battle in the streets; and if they were to send officers to take him in Bethany, he would be sure to receive sufficient notice of their coming to allow him to escape.

But while the priests were deliberating, help came to them from an entirely unexpected quarter. A man came before them whom they knew to be one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, with a proposal to deliver his Master into their power. This man was Judas Iscariot, or Judas of Kerioth, — the only man among the twelve who was a native of Judea, — the rest being Galileans. He had stolen away from Bethany, with treachery in his heart, to act this infamous part in assisting his Master's enemies. We are not told what motives influenced him to such a course. He could not have been a bad man always, or Jesus would have known it, and never would have chosen him as a disciple. He had been one of his Master's trusted companions, and had served as treasurer for the twelve disciples. Wicked as his deed was, we cannot suppose that Jesus was so easily deceived as to live in the closest relations with a deliberate villain, and not discover his true character.

It is probable that Judas was weak, rather than wicked. He had perhaps been attracted by the preaching of Jesus without deeply understanding it. It was with the greatest difficulty that Jesus succeeded in making any of his disciples see something nobler than their dream of a splendid and victorious system of government, and Judas may have clung to his old ideas longer than the rest. When he found himself in Jerusalem, and saw the priests in their gorgeous robes, Judas, being a native of Judea, may have felt the charm of the old religion more strongly than his companions. Then, his Master made no move toward establishing himself as king, but on the contrary, talked of the destruction of the Temple and the downfall of the nation. Judas had thought that the changes to be brought about by the Messiah would make the nation greater and stronger than ever. When he realized that Jesus could not be induced to seize the government for the purpose of freeing his people and making them rich and powerful, Judas began to doubt whether he were the true Messiah. But if Jesus was not the Messiah then he was only an impostor, reasoned Judas; and this idea took possession of his mind, till he persuaded himself that his Master was a dangerous man, who ought to be restrained from preaching to the people. Probably his disappointment, in not finding himself so great as he had expected the followers of Jesus to become, had something to do with his decision. But having determined that the priests were right and his Master wrong, he shut his eyes to the sin of the treachery he was meditating, and, for the time being, believed that it was his duty to help in getting Jesus arrested. Such seems to be the most reasonable explanation of his conduct.

While Judas was thus consulting with the priests, it is not to be supposed that his action entirely escaped the notice of Jesus. So keen an observer could not have remained ignorant of the growing disaffection of one who had been a near friend. He probably guessed at once, from the absence of Judas, whither and upon what errand he had gone. It must have been a bitter thought to him, that one of his disciples was to prove traitor; but as the others suspected nothing, he kept his sorrow

to himself. He saw that at the longest it would be only a few days before the angry priests would have him in their clutches, and perhaps hoped that the constancy of the rest of the disciples would be strengthened by their horror at the faithlessness of Judas.

Thursday, the 14th of April, was the day for the opening of the great feast of the Passover; and on the morning of that day, Jesus sent some of his followers into the city to prepare for their celebration of that event. This feast began with a solemn supper, that commemorated the night on which their forefathers made their escape from Egypt. The food for this repast was always of the same kind, and it was prepared and eaten with many religious ceremonies. During the afternoon, the head of each family carried to the Temple a lamb, which was there killed, and part of which was left to be burned on the sacred altar. The lamb was then roasted whole in an earthen oven. In addition to this, the supper consisted of bread made without yeast, a dish of bitter herbs, and a certain number of cups of red wine. The blowing of trumpets from the Temple Mount at sunset announced the time when the supper might be eaten. Then the head of the family, who acted as a kind of priest, opened the feast by pouring out a cup of wine, pronouncing a blessing over it, and giving it to those assembled about the board, to drink. The dish of bitter herbs, and the unleavened bread were each eaten as a course by itself, blessings and prayers being meanwhile recited. When the lamb was brought forward the company was obliged to eat the whole of it. The last morsel was eaten by him who had opened the feast, and the supper concluded with another cup of wine and the singing of a hymn of praise. The occasion on the whole was a joyful one, but there was some degree of solemnity mingled with its festivity.

Jesus and his twelve disciples celebrated this supper together, as a family, in the house of one of his friends in Jerusalem. It was the first time that they had met together for this purpose; and for Jesus it was not only the last Passover, but the last time that food or drink passed his lips. The supper probably

began and proceeded according to the usual custom, as it has been described. It was to the disciples — all save one — like the consecration of their brotherhood. That one — Judas — was undoubtedly very ill at ease; for he had ceased to feel that he was one of the band, and this very night he was to lead a company of soldiers against the Master, whose disciple he still professed to be. Jesus saw from his manner that he had probably completed his plot with the priests and was only waiting for the end of the supper to carry it into effect.

The heart of the Master was so deeply grieved by this treachery that he could no longer forbear to seek some sympathy. He spoke abruptly, "Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me." With one accord they all began to exclaim and protest: "Is it I?" "Do you mean me?" But Jesus did not then wish to unmask Judas. That disciple might feel justified in his course, if his Master denounced him while he had only his suspicions to allege against him. Jesus only desired to call forth from the others new evidence of their fidelity, and to let Judas understand that what he was trying to conceal was already known. He therefore merely repeated, "The hand of him who shall betray me has been dipped with mine into this dish." Thus did Jesus hold up to the traitor a picture of his infamy, — saying to him, in effect, that he was eating at the same table, like a brother, with one towards whom he meant to act the part of a deadly enemy.

After this, Judas was so uncomfortable that he soon rose to leave the room. Jesus looked at him as he was retiring, and said quietly, "What thou hast to do, do quickly." So well had Judas played a part before his brethren that even now they did not suspect him as the betrayer, and supposed that what he "had to do," was some errand upon which Jesus had sent him. But all through the remainder of the supper, Jesus must have been conscious that the door without was watched by spies, posted there by his faithless disciple.

Judas being gone, Jesus talked to his disciples most tenderly and lovingly. The fourteenth chapter of John contains a report of what he said at this time. It is too long to quote entirely,

and its charm could not be kept in any mere abridgment. It should be read as a whole, and we only need to say here, that Jesus sought to comfort and strengthen the minds of his disciples in view of his approaching death.

At the close of the supper, there was a very significant ceremony, which is observed to this day in remembrance of him by whom it was first performed. Jesus took one of the loaves of bread, and having broken it in pieces, gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; for this bread signifies my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me." When this had been eaten, he filled a cup of wine and gave it them to drink, saying, "This wine represents my blood which is to be shed for you. As often as ye drink it, do it in remembrance of me."

We can hear in these sayings the affectionate heart of Jesus, pleading with those whom he loved, to be held by them in loving memory. But his wisdom also taught him, that amid the trying scenes to follow his death the disciples would need some rite that was distinctively their own, to hold them together. The custom thus founded has lived in all branches of the church. There have been, and are, many widely differing beliefs about it. But wherever people call themselves Christians, they still gather about the "Lord's Table," in remembrance of him who gave his life so freely, to make the earth more like heaven.

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IX.

THE ARREST.

**MATT. xxvi. 30-56; MARK xiv. 26-52; LUKE xxii. 31-53;
JOHN xv., xvi , xvii., xviii. 1-12.**

It was commanded that the Passover supper should end before midnight; and it was probably near that hour when Jesus and his disciples rose to return to Bethany. The supper being ended, they sang a hymn of praise, which was perhaps the one hundred and fifteenth, and two following Psalms. Then they made ready to depart. The disciples were somewhat anxious about the lonely walk at night, while Jesus had no expectation of seeing Bethany again. He understood, when Judas left the room, what business that faithless disciple had in hand, as well as if the whole plot had been revealed to him. It befitted his dignity, however, that he should not run or hide from his enemies, but should go on his way peaceably and quietly.

Still, though he preserved his calmness outwardly, Jesus was troubled in spirit. Not only did he shrink from the suffering before him, but he feared lest his disciples should lose courage altogether, when they saw him a prisoner. Simon, to whom he had given the name Peter, was one of the truest and most devoted of his followers; yet Jesus predicted rightly that the heart of this disciple would fail him when the crisis came. "Simon," he said, as they stood waiting for him to lead the way into the street, "Satan hath desired to have thee; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail." "Though all the rest desert thee," Simon answered, "I will be faithful; and will go with thee, if need be, to prison, and to death." Jesus no doubt smiled, a little sadly, as he looked upon the

man who thought he was so brave, and said, "Before this night is over, you will deny that you ever knew me."

"All of you will be disappointed and offended in me this night," he continued. "Like a flock of sheep when the shepherd has been struck down, you will be scattered in fear and trembling." Doubtless they felt that their Master did not give them as much credit as they deserved. But they had no chance to protest their loyalty, for Jesus went on speaking: "When I sent you forth to preach, without purse, or wallet, or even shoes, did you ever want for anything?" "Nothing," they answered. "But now," said he, "let each man look to himself; for my affairs come to an end, and you must provide for yourselves means of support and defence." "Behold, we have here two swords," some one said,—as if, thus armed, they need not be afraid of anything. We may imagine that Jesus smiled again at the somewhat childish bravado of his disciples. But he only said, "It is enough;" and then led the way out of the house.

It was bright moonlight,—for the feast was always held at the time of the full moon,—so they found their way without difficulty. They passed through the silent streets, out of the gateway through which, a few days before, Jesus had made his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, over the bridge beneath which the waters of the Kedron sounded a lazy murmur, and in a few moments they were under the shade of the olive orchards extending up the hillside toward Bethany.

Here Jesus paused and turned aside from the path. He felt sure that Judas, with a band of the Temple watchmen or police, would soon be in pursuit, and it is not improbable that his watchful eye had seen one or two shadowy figures following at a distance, to mark his course. Possibly he did not wish to subject his friends in Bethany to the fright and tumult that would be occasioned by his arrest, and therefore determined to wait in the fields for a time, to see if his suspicions were fulfilled. But he had also another reason for stopping here upon the Mount of Olives. His agitated heart felt a great longing to pour itself out to God. Many a night he had gone forth

under the stars, and spent the hours when others were sleeping, in prayer to his Heavenly Father for wisdom and strength. He wished now to be alone with God to prepare for his last great trial.

Entering a garden, or grove of olive trees, at a place called Gethsemane, — which means “the oil-press,” — he said to his disciples, “Wait ye here, while I go forward to pray.” Then taking with him Peter and James and John, he went a little further among the trees. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” he said to these three; “abide here and watch with me.” So saying, he went a few steps apart, and throwing himself not only upon his knees, but with his very face to the ground, he prayed, “O my Father ! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” What other words he used, we do not know, but he prayed thus a long time. He knew that God had led him to this hour ; and he saw the will of his Father in Heaven, that he should give up his life rather than fly from his enemies or cease to bear witness to the truth. But to die now, when he had so much reason to fear that his disciples were not yet strong enough to go on without him ; to die the terrible, lingering death by crucifixion, which was the Roman method of punishing criminals, — was there no other way but this ? No wonder that, in agony of soul, he asked God that he might not be forced to drink this bitter cup. He had seen it before him for a long while, but when it was put to his lips, he could not help crying out his wish to be spared.

After a time, he arose from the ground and returned to his three companions, whom he found asleep. “What !” he said sorrowfully, “Could ye not watch with me one little hour ? If not for my sake, yet watch and pray for yourselves, lest trial come upon you.” Once more he turned from them, and this time he prayed with stronger, quieter spirit, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

Let us make a picture of the scene in our minds, — the still night, with the moonlight falling through the foliage ; the

heavy-eyed disciples striving to keep awake, but yielding to sleep, because they were not aware of the nearness of danger; the Master praying alone upon the ground, and perhaps lifting his head from time to time to listen if he could hear the footsteps of his pursuers. A second time he came back to find his followers sleeping, and a third time he returned to his lonely prayer.

At last he arose calm and strong. The disciples were still sleeping. "Sleep on," said Jesus, "and take your rest." He no longer needed the human sympathy which, during his struggle, he had vainly sought from them. But just then the heavy sound of a body of marching men reached his ear, and he called upon his followers to awake. "It is enough!" he cried in thrilling words. "The hour is at hand. The Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us go! Behold my betrayer is at hand."

As the disciples started to their feet in amazement, they saw themselves rapidly surrounded by a large force of armed men, who had entered the garden, with Judas at their head. It seems to have been arranged by the priests that Judas should make Jesus known to the officers by going forward and saluting him in the usual manner, with a kiss. The careful way in which the expedition had been planned, and the large number of men sent out, show that the priests had become very much afraid of Jesus. Judas now advanced, and saying, "Hail, Rabbi!" he kissed Jesus on the cheek. "Friend, wherefore art *thou* come?" Jesus asked, reproachfully. "What have I done to you," the question meant, "that you should betray me thus?" We may well suppose that the gentle and sorely wounded love that was in the words and look of Jesus awoke at that instant the shame and remorse which afterward led Judas to destroy himself.

Turning to the officials in command, Jesus said: "Ye come out to seize me with swords and clubs, as if I were a robber. Why did ye not take me when I sat teaching in the Temple? Ye dared not stretch out your hands against me then, and are only brave in this hour of darkness." At a sign from their leaders,

the soldiers seized and bound him, — Jesus offering not the least resistance. But how these bonds must have cut into his very soul! Knowing himself entirely innocent, how keenly he must have felt the outrage, when, with pinioned arms and surrounded by officers of the law, he was led back toward the city, like a notorious thief or murderer!

Meantime most of the disciples had fled. Not more than two or three of them followed their Master, and these kept far in the rear of the soldiers. Once more, over the Kedron and through the city gate. But this time no glad throng of disciples attended the Messiah, singing Hosannas to the Son of David. He walked with bowed head and sorrowful heart, — a prisoner among angry foes, expecting neither justice nor mercy at their hands.

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X.

THE TRIAL.

MATT. xxvi. 57-75, xxvii. 1-26 ; MARK xiv. 53-72, xv. 1-15 ,
LUKE xxii. 54-71, xxiii. 1-25 ; JOHN xviii. 12-40, xix. 1-16.

THE men who had arrested Jesus led him to the palace of the High Priest, Caiaphas, where his trial was to take place. The High Priest was president of a court, or council, called the Sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy judges, and was the highest legal tribunal of the Jews. At least a third of these judges must take part with the High Priest in a trial before a verdict could be passed and sentence pronounced. The Romans, however, would not allow the Jews to execute any of their criminals. If the Sanhedrim found a prisoner deserving of death, he was given over to the Roman governor, who then considered the case and either annulled the sentence or carried it into effect, at his own discretion.

The High Priest had sent messengers to call together the members of the Sanhedrim before the arrival of Jesus ; for he wished the trial to be ended before the people could be made aware of the arrest, and before Jesus could have a chance to summon friends to his rescue. He supposed that the man who had displayed such boldness in the Temple would fight for his life if any opportunity were left to him. Therefore, though it was not yet daylight, the judges seem to have been already assembled, and various witnesses were in readiness when the officers returned with their prisoner. So far as the judges were concerned, no trial was necessary, since they were determined to find Jesus guilty ; but, as they wished Pilate to crucify him, they must not only condemn him in legal form, but must make out a case which would induce the governor to carry out their sentence.

Jesus was led by his captors through an archway opening from the street into a paved inner court, about which the palace of the High Priest was built. Most of the soldiers remained in this court during the trial, while a guard, selected for that purpose, conducted Jesus into a room of the palace, where the judges were waiting to receive him. They sat around the room in a half-circle, with the High Priest in the middle of the line. Before him Jesus was brought, still bound, and left standing. The charge against him was stated, and witnesses were called to prove it. The charge was, that he had deceived the people with false doctrines, had taught them to disobey the precepts of their religion, and was guilty of blasphemy.

One after another, witnesses came forward to tell what they had heard him say as he taught in the Temple ; but neither did they agree well in their testimony, nor could they report anything which would seem very bad to the Roman governor. Jesus had indeed spoken against the priests, but it was on account of their wickedness, and Pilate would not be likely to put him to death for such sayings. At last came two men who testified that Jesus had said "he could destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days." Even this was false evidence ; for, though he had spoken of the fall of the Temple, he had expressed no purpose to be himself the destroyer.

Jesus had not, as yet, uttered one word during his trial. He had manifested no desire to contradict or question the witnesses, but had simply stood there quietly watching the proceedings, as if he were only a spectator. He knew that, while they had brought and could bring against him no good evidence strong enough to convict him, yet it was perfectly useless for him to make any defence. The High Priest also saw that as yet no case had been made out to which Pilate would listen, and that his hopes were likely to fail unless he could provoke some imprudent word from Jesus himself. He therefore rose and addressed Jesus angrily : "Answerest thou nothing to what these testify against thee?" Jesus made no reply. Perhaps he did not even look at the man who was at once his prosecutor and his judge.

So far, nothing had been said about the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, though that was the subject that was in all minds. The priests had wished to let that question rest, and simply condemn Jesus as a false teacher ; for if they accused him of pretending to be the Messiah, that would only make the people more ready to believe that he was one whom God had sent. But now the High Priest realized that the charge of false teaching had broken down, and that they must bring forward the other accusation. Looking fixedly at Jesus, he said, "If thou be the Messiah, tell us."

Jesus might still have kept silence, and they would have found it very difficult to prove anything against him on this charge. But he saw that they were determined to murder him, with or without reason. If he was to be killed, it should be because he declared himself the Messiah, and not on any less weighty charge. On this subject, therefore, he was ready to speak. He now answered to the High Priest's demand, "If I tell you, you will not believe." The crafty, snake-like Caiaphas thought he saw his opportunity. "I adjure thee, by the living God," he said, "that thou tell us whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of God." He used this solemn form of words because he thought it would encourage Jesus and lead him on to declare himself, in the hope that those about him were almost ready to believe. Jesus was not thus deceived, but the time had gone by when he wished to avoid speaking publicly of his appointment from God. Meeting the High Priest's eye steadily, he said in his clear and quiet way, "You have said what I am." Then, as if anticipating the scorn of his judges, he continued, "The time will come when you shall see the power and glory of the Son of Man, as if they were written on the very clouds of heaven."

The High Priest was almost beside himself with rage when he heard these words. He tore apart his priestly robe in his anger, and cried out to the other judges, "He has spoken blasphemy ! What need of more witnesses ? Ye have heard his blasphemy ; what think ye ?" And every voice answered, "He is guilty, and deserving of death." This ended the trial. The judges threw aside their dignity and rushed upon their

prisoner, whose arms were fettered, so that he could not have defended himself if he had wished. They struck him with their hands, and spat in his face. "Thou, the Messiah !" they said to him mockingly. "Tell us who it is that buffets thee, if thou hast such divine powers." But he answered them not a word. No cry of anger or pain passed his lips, and he stood among them as if their assaults were no more than the beating of the waves against a wall of rock.

While all this was taking place, Peter and perhaps one or two more of the disciples had made their way into the court of the palace. The night was chilly, and some of the soldiers had a fire of coals about which they were warming themselves. Peter was standing in this group, when some one said to him, "Thou wast with this Jesus, the Galilean." Peter, being alarmed, answered, "I know not what thou sayest," and immediately withdrew to another part of the court. After a time he was again approached by one who said, "Surely, thou art one of the disciples of Jesus ; thy speech shows that thou art of Galilee." Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. A third time he was addressed, — this time by one who said that he saw Peter when Jesus was arrested, — and a third time Peter declared that he did not know Jesus. Soon afterward the crowing of the cocks announced that morning was near ; and as Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him a few hours before, "he went out and wept bitterly."

It is probable that as soon as it was day, Jesus was hurried off under a strong guard to the regular council-chamber of the Sanhedrim in the Temple, in order that formal sentence of death might be there pronounced against him. From thence he was taken, in the early hours of the morning and before many people were abroad, to the residence of the Roman Governor. The priests and judges and leading Pharisees, together with the officers and servants who surrounded Jesus, made up a large procession ; but doubtless they all breathed easier when they were safely within the walls that surrounded Pilate's house, and felt themselves under the protection of the strong troop of Roman soldiers by which that place was guarded.

Having sent word to Pilate upon what business they had come, the Governor soon appeared in the large, open space where they were assembled and mounted his judgment-seat. Jesus was placed before him, and some one — probably the High Priest — informed Pilate that the prisoner had been found guilty, on his own confession, of pretending to be king of the Jews. Now Pilate hated and despised the whole Jewish nation. He was cruel and tyrannical, and loved to torment the people who did not readily submit to his rule. He already knew of Jesus, for the Romans were keenly on the watch for any one who should dispute their authority. Pilate had then in prison a noted man, named Barabba, who was guilty of the offence with which Jesus was charged, — that of stirring up rebellion against the Emperor. Pilate understood perfectly that Jesus was an altogether different kind of man, and when he saw how the chief men of the city hated him, the Governor was quite willing to take the part of Jesus, for the sake of thwarting their wishes.

When the High Priest had made his accusation, and others had cried out against Jesus that he deceived the people and taught them not to pay tribute to Cæsar, Pilate said, "Thou hearest what these testify against thee ; how dost thou answer them ?" But again Jesus refused to reply. He would not notice the falsehoods of his enemies even so much as to deny them. "Is it true, then, that thou art a king ?" Pilate asked. And now Jesus answered as he had before the Sanhedrim: "Thou sayest it ;" that is, "You have given me my true name."

Pilate then took Jesus into a room apart from the crowd to examine him ; and here Jesus spoke more freely. He was a king, he said, but his kingdom was not of this world. He came simply to bear witness to the truth. Pilate was not at all impressed with a liking for Jesus, for he exclaimed contemptuously, "What is truth ?" But as he saw that Jesus was not likely to give him trouble, and would be a thorn in the sides of the priests and Pharisees, he was willing to let him live. So he returned to the judgment-seat, and reminding the priests of his custom to release a Jewish prisoner during the feast of the

Passover, asked whether it should be Jesus or Barabba. Perhaps Pilate thought they would not dare to demand the latter, as he had actually done the things which they accused Jesus of wishing to do. At least, if they should ask to have Barabba released, it would expose the hollowness of their pretended care for the Emperor. But all the people, being instructed by the priests, said, "Let us have Barabba."

"What, then, shall I do with your king?" said Pilate. "Let him be crucified!" they shouted. "Why, I find no fault in him; what evil hath he done?" continued the Governor. But they only cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate found that they were determined to have Jesus killed, and he dared not go beyond a certain point in opposing their will; for if he could not preserve a decent amount of peace with his subjects, the Emperor would remove him from his office. The fate of Jesus was not a matter of great consequence to him, either way. At last he yielded, and confirmed the sentence of the Sanhedrim. The priests had gained their point; Jesus would be put to death; and it was with great satisfaction that they saw him led away by the Roman soldiers.

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XL

THE CRUCIFIXION.

**MATT. xxvii. 26-50 ; MARK xv. 15-37 ; LUKE xxiii. 26-46 ;
JOHN xix. 1-30.**

OF all people that ever lived, the Romans were among the most brutal. Sights at which we should grow sick with horror made up the public games and spectacles in which they found their chief delight. But of all Romans none were so dead to feelings of pity as the soldiers, whose cruel instincts were strengthened by their occupation. Even among them there was a difference. Those who served under the great generals felt a certain pride and dignity of place, which sometimes restrained them from oppressive practices ; but those employed in distant provinces, like Judea, to guard the person of the governor and uphold his authority, were generally of the very lowest and roughest class.

When Jesus had received his sentence from Pilate he was taken in charge by these soldiers, who were the most unfeeling men that a brutal nation could produce. It was the custom to scourge a prisoner before carrying out sentence of crucifixion, and these soldiers were too fond of inflicting suffering to omit this part of the usual procedure. Jesus did not faint or cry out under the lash, though there is every reason to believe that the soldiers tried to break his spirit. They did not know much about him, and cared nothing for him. He was a Jew, and they despised Jews ; he was a man who could be made to feel suffering, and they loved to see a human body writhing under torture. Perhaps their blows fell upon him all the longer and harder because he would not groan or beg for mercy.

When they found that they could wring from him no response to the terrible anguish they were inflicting, they bethought themselves of another way of tormenting him. They had heard the

charge against him, — that he gave himself out to be king of the Jews, — and perhaps knew that a proud and sensitive spirit is often more deeply stung by ridicule than by any amount of physical pain. They therefore determined to make a mock king of him, and so turn him to derision. They brought a scarlet cloak, such as the soldiers wore, and hung it over his naked, bleeding shoulders ; into his fettered hands they tied a wooden rod for a sceptre ; and upon his head they placed a crown woven of thorny twigs, in imitation of the laurel wreath sometimes worn by the emperor. Then one after another they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, “ Hail, King of the Jews ! ” Many of them, to add point to the jest, spat upon him as they rose to their feet, or, seizing the rod out of his hand, smote him over the head.

And how did Jesus bear all this ? He bore it like a king, and did not gratify his tormentors by the least trace of weakness or cowardice. We may see him looking calmly into the eyes of those who approached him, with such a quiet majesty upon his pale face that they felt a touch of guilt in their sport, and the laugh died half-uttered upon their lips.

The soldiers were soon taken from their cruel pastime by the order of their officers calling out the guard which was to accompany Jesus to the place of execution. He was now dressed in his own clothing, which had been removed during the scourging, and led forth to the gate of the palace. Here he was joined by two other prisoners, who were to suffer death at the same time. These men were common thieves, and we may suspect that Pilate caused them to accompany Jesus for the sake of thrusting a fresh insult at the Jewish people. It was the custom to carry before the criminal, as he went to his crucifixion, a board on which was written the crime for which he was to be killed. Pilate had prepared for this occasion a tablet bearing the inscription, “ This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” There is no doubt that he meant to show his contempt for the people of Jerusalem by giving this title to one who was about to die a death of shame. Perhaps it was to degrade Jesus still further in the eyes of those whose king he was said to be, that the Governor

made these convicted robbers his companions in death. He knew how it would outrage the feelings of the proud priests and Pharisees to say to them, in effect, "This man, who walks with thieves to a thief's end, is good enough to be your king."

It was one of the refinements of that cruelty with which the Romans treated their condemned criminals, that they made them carry their own cross, or part of it at least, as they went to be executed. The cross commonly used at this time was in two parts. There was an upright part, fixed in the earth, and a cross-beam, made to fit into it some five or six feet above the level of the ground. Probably it was this beam that Jesus had to carry through the streets of the city.

Surrounded by soldiers, and followed by some of his accusers, Jesus was thus led away to death. Not many of the populace had been informed of his arrest; for it was after midnight when the officers took him, and not yet noon when he left Pilate's house, bearing his cross. Perhaps among the throng going up to the Temple that morning were many people who hoped to find him there, that they might listen to his teaching. But if such there were, and they looked upon Jesus as he moved along, they would not easily recognize in the pale, blood-stained face, of which they caught glimpses between files of marching soldiers, the features of that great Prophet whose words had thrilled their hearts. He was recognized, however, by some of the women in the crowded streets, who raised the shrill cry of lamentation with which the Jews mourned their dead. Jesus turned to them and said, "Weep not for me, daughters of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and your children."

It seems that Jesus could not bear the burden laid upon him to the satisfaction of the soldiers, for as they passed through the city gate they seized a stranger who was entering, and forced him to carry the cross for the remainder of the way. We must remember that, while Jesus was not at all a weak man, his strength had been much reduced by what he had undergone. He had passed through long hours of intense suffering and received a terrible scourging since last he had tasted food. It is not to be wondered at if he felt faint, and staggered under the

pieces of wood which had considerable weight. The Romans were accustomed to force any of the natives they might meet upon the road do service as a packhorse. The man who thus accidentally comes into our story here was one Simon, a Jew from Cyrene, a city of North Africa, who had come up to the feast little dreaming of the way in which he was to be made famous forever afterward.

A short march outside the city brought them to a place called Golgotha, which means "the place of a skull." The Greeks called the place Calvary; and though its site is now lost, we may suppose it to have been some bare, round hillock near the roadside. Here the horrid work of crucifixion was soon performed. The Jews had persuaded the Romans to give the victim, who was about to be nailed to the cross, a drink containing some powerful drug, by which he was partially stupefied. In accordance with the custom this drink was now offered to Jesus; but after he had tasted it and knew what it was, he would not touch it. He preferred to meet his suffering armed only with heroic patience, and was strong enough to face death without the help of a stupefying drink.

He was then once more stripped of his clothing, and having been bound and nailed to the cross, like any common criminal, he was left hanging thus till death should come to his release. After the two thieves were crucified, one on each side of him, a guard was posted about the place and the rest of the soldiers marched back to the city. While the executioners were doing their work, Jesus maintained perfect composure and said no word, except that he prayed once, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They were indeed ignorant of the meaning of the scene they were enacting. To them it was an every-day affair. They did not dream that the noble and patient sufferer, against whom their rude hands were lifted, would live forever in the memory of the world, to make his cross, till then a symbol of sin and shame, an emblem which the greatest and the holiest should be proud to wear.

Through all the hot hours of mid-day Jesus hung upon his cross, patiently enduring the suffering. What thoughts were in

his mind as he looked away to Jerusalem and the distant mountains, we hardly dare to guess. Much of the time, no doubt, he was silently praying ; but he spoke very little. The soldiers varied the monotony of standing guard by throwing dice, to see who should have his clothing. Some of his enemies came out from the city to gloat over his downfall. "Come down from the cross, if thou be the Son of God," they said to him. "King of Israel, come down, and we will believe on thee." But to all these taunts he answered nothing. Doubtless many of those who loved him, when they received word of what had taken place, came and stood as near as the soldiers would allow them. It is related that once, as Jesus opened his eyes, he saw his mother with one of his disciples among those about him, and wishing this disciple to care for his mother like a son, he said, looking from one to the other, "Mother, behold thy son ; son, behold thy mother."

Toward evening, as his strength failed, it was harder to bear the pain ; and once he cried out, in the language of the Psalms, "My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?" (Psalm xxii. 1.) We must not take this to mean that he had lost faith. It was a cry wrung from him by his physical pain, which naturally expressed itself in words he had learned in his boyhood. A little time afterward he said, "I thirst." One of the soldiers, more compassionate than the others, who cried "Let be ! " took the sponge used to stop the mouth of the bottle in which their drink was stored, and, fixing it upon a reed, held it up to the lips of Jesus.

The end now came very fast. There was one more sharp cry of pain. He was heard to say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." At last, — with what a sigh of relief, we can imagine, — he murmured, "It is finished ;" then bowed his head upon his breast, and died.

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XII.

THE RESURRECTION.

**MATT. xxvii. 57-66 ; xxviii. MARK xv. 42-47 ; xvi. LUKE
xxiii. 50-56 ; xxiv. JOHN xix. 38-42 ; xx ; xxi.**

It was not the custom of the Romans to give burial to those who died on the cross. The hand of a Roman governor was always open to bribes, however, and almost any favor could be purchased by those who were able to pay. Among the many friends of Jesus who had sympathized with him in secret, but had not quite enough courage to call themselves his disciples openly, was one Joseph of Arimathæa, a man who possessed wealth and influence. He, being emboldened, perhaps, by his indignation at the cruelty and injustice done to Jesus, went to Pilate and begged to be allowed to take the dead body from the cross. It is not said that he paid money to Pilate for this privilege, but it is probable that in no other way could he have moved the Governor to grant his request.

So Joseph, assisted by the friends of Jesus who remained about the place, took down the cross, washed and dressed the peaceful form which had found rest from all its sufferings, and bore it away to the tomb. Joseph owned a sepulchre, which had been cut out of the solid rock, and in this Jesus was placed. The door of the tomb was closed by rolling into it a huge stone. and the little group of friends turned away with hearts full of grief. This took place on Friday evening, and the day following was the Jewish Sabbath. On the morning of the day after the Sabbath,—the day that we call Sunday,—it is said that Jesus appeared alive to some of these friends whose loving hands had helped to place his body in the sepulchre.

This great event, the Resurrection of Christ, we celebrate by our Easter festival ; and as it occurred on the first day of the week, Christians, from the earliest times, have kept that as their holy day, instead of the Jewish Sabbath.

Nothing that is told about Jesus is more important to us than this story of the Resurrection. But in no other instance is it so difficult to determine the exact truth among the conflicting accounts that are given. The Gospels relate the matter so differently that some of them, at least, must be mistaken. Moreover, they all tell the story as if the body of Jesus that had once died came to life again ; and it is impossible for us to believe this to be true.

We must again remind ourselves how such mistakes crept into the Gospels. The life of Jesus was first written by men who knew the facts. But after they were dead, many things were told which had only been imagined. For the most part, these fables about Jesus were so absurd that they deceived nobody but the very ignorant. Many of them remain to our own time, in books called the Apocryphal Gospels, and we have only to read them to know that they cannot be true. But there were others which seemed more plausible. Some of the Gospel stories were told in new form, and with added details, which did not appear to take away their truth, but rather to give them greater clearness and force. There is one reason which accounts for the adoption of a new version of the Resurrection, in place of that left by the original writers. They, we may suppose, had simply spoken of having seen Jesus after his death on the cross, and told what he had said to them. But this meant to most people of that day, that his body had risen from the grave ; for it had been the belief of the Jews that their bodies would come to life again at the time of the Messiah's appearing. Therefore, when tales grew up, relating how the risen Christ had eaten with his disciples, and had shown them the wounds in his hands and feet made by the nails of the cross, it seemed to the men who copied the Gospels that these tales must come from what the first disciples had said. This was after the death of these disciples ; and so,

when such imaginary details were made a part of the Gospels, there was nobody to contradict them.

Now, the Apostle Paul speaks of the Resurrection, and his account is probably the earliest that has come down to us without change (1 Cor. xv. 3-8). He says that at the time he wrote there were some still living who had seen Jesus after his resurrection. Paul did not suppose that it was the body of flesh and blood, but a new spiritual body that rose from the dead. We may safely conclude that he tells us what the first disciples told him. We may therefore believe the earliest testimony to have been that the spiritual body of Jesus was seen by the disciples, after his earthly body had perished on the cross.

Let us look at the story as it is told in the Gospel of John. Mary Magdalene, one of the women who came with Jesus from Galilee, visited the sepulchre early Sunday morning, and found that the stone which closed up the door had been moved out of its place. In great grief and alarm she went back to find Peter and John, and tell them what had happened. They hastened with her to the tomb, and entering in, found it empty. Peter and John at once departed, but Mary remained at the place weeping. After a time she stooped to look into the tomb, and saw two angels there, who asked her why she was weeping. Mary answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Then as she raised her head she saw one standing near her, who asked, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Being partly blinded by her tears, she thought him the gardener who had charge of the place, and said to him, "O sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him!" Then the man called her by name, "Mary;" and with the joyful cry, "Master!" she recognized him as Jesus.

We should have no difficulty in accepting this, if we could believe that the dead body of Jesus came back to life. We may believe, however, that the spiritual form of Jesus appeared first to Mary and other of the women that were among the disciples, on the occasion of their visit to the sepulchre early Sunday

morning ; since all the Gospels agree that through them the joyful news was first made known. We may believe also that Jesus said to them, as the Gospel of Matthew reports, " Go, bid my brethren return to Galilee, and there shall they see me." It may have been in Galilee, that Jesus afterward repeatedly appeared, as Paul relates.

But after all, the particulars about the Resurrection are not of great consequence to us. All we need to know is that Jesus proved to his disciples the certainty of a life after death, by showing himself to them in the heavenly form which death cannot destroy. When Jesus was arrested, his followers were seized with fear, as he had foretold. They either hid themselves or hurried back to their homes, dreading lest they also might be taken by the officers. When they knew that Jesus was dead, they doubtless gave up all the hopes they had cherished, and thought no more of continuing the work which Jesus had begun. It is not strange if they lost courage entirely. Where Jesus with his great gifts had won so little power, and had so soon fallen a victim to priestly hate, what could they expect to accomplish ?

But while they were in this deep despondency, the tidings spread from one to another, " Jesus lives. Though the priests have killed his body, his spirit is with us still. He has been seen, and has spoken to his sorrowing friends. He will help us to conquer, and whatever happens to us here, he has shown us that we shall have a better life hereafter." Under the influence of this inspiring certainty, the men whom Jesus had often reproached for their timidity and lack of faith, became strong and full of zeal. They took up the work that their Master had given them, and though they encountered pitiless opposition, which brought many of them to a martyr's death, they gladly spent all the rest of their lives in preaching the gospel that Jesus had taught them.

When you come to read the history of early Christian times, you will learn how thousands upon thousands of Christians suffered death, nobly and calmly, rather than give up the religion which the Roman emperors tried again and again to stamp out.

All these brave men and women were sustained by their belief that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that, as his followers, a happy immortality was in store for them. It could not have been wholly a false idea out of which they derived their wonderful heroism. Though they held some mistaken beliefs about it, it must be true that Jesus came back from heaven, and in some way made known to his disciples the fact that he still watched over them.

At the time when Jesus was on earth, people did not have any such strong belief in the future life of the soul as we now possess. He could not have made heaven very real or certain to the men of that day simply by means of his teachings. But when they saw his presence, unharmed by death, then they knew that they also should pass through the grave in safety. Then they felt that their cause was not lost; for he whom they had followed as the Messiah was near them still, to lead them on to victory. In the strength of this conviction they could brave all the evil and ignorance of the world; and though they were so few, they went forward undismayed, to lay the foundations of the mighty Christian Church.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every living creature," was the final command of Jesus to his faithful friends, charged with the task of carrying on the work of God that he had begun. And for their encouragement he left this promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." These words have not lost their meaning for us, who try to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. It should be our endeavor to strengthen in all hearts the truths and hopes upon which the Kingdom of Heaven is built; and we may find help in the thought that this great and wise leader of men is still our friend in heaven, "even to the end of the world."

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QUESTIONS

ON

THE LIFE OF JESUS

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QUESTIONS.

QUESTIONS.

I.

Has religion always been what it is now? What has its growth been like? If one were to sow acorns in a field, what would become of most of them? Would many grow up to become trees?

What were the beginnings of religion, far back in the past? What became of most ancient religions? What one religion possessed a stronger life than others? Did this religion have much to contend with? Is the religion of the Hebrews connected with our Christianity? Through what great person were the two brought together?

What was the first step of religious progress? Who was the one God of the Hebrews? Did they at first think that the gods of other people were real?

What was the second step of religious progress? What did the Hebrews think were Jehovah's feelings toward other people? What did they expect Jehovah to do for them?

What was the third step of religious progress? To whom do we owe it that religion took that step? What did he teach, that led to this step? What change did it make in the feelings of men toward each other? Is there as much war as in former times? May we hope for a time when fighting will cease?

What change did Jesus effect in the way men thought of God? How did he change their belief about pleasing God? What did men think before, and what did he teach them about a future life? What did his early disciples call the story of his life and teachings? Why should the story interest us?

QUESTIONS.

II.

Have we much knowledge of the boyhood of Jesus? Can you think of some famous men, of whose early years we know little? What reason can be given why the first followers of Jesus should not have told us more about his youth?

In what country, and in what province of that country, is Nazareth situated? Can you find it on the map? Give some description of the place. Who lived there at the time our story opens? What was their station in life? Of what great man is Joseph said to have been a descendant?

Can you tell why Joseph should have made a visit to Bethlehem? How did people travel in those days? What can you tell of the journey to Bethlehem? In what condition did they find the town upon their arrival? Where did they go? Where then is Jesus said to have been born?

What meaning is there in the fact that he was born of poor parents and in this humble place? Did any of the power he afterward attained come from wealth or social position? What enabled him to win command over the hearts of men? If we speak the truth, what will that do for us?

What is the story about the angels singing in the sky? Did the world know that anything important had happened when Jesus was born? Was the next morning any different from other mornings? Was it anywhere known on earth what the future of the young babe would be? What may we believe that the angels in heaven knew and felt?

QUESTIONS.

III.

Where did Jesus pass the years of his boyhood? What means have we for knowing something of his life during this period?

What do travellers tell us about the women and children of Nazareth? How may we picture to ourselves the mother of Jesus? How may we think of Jesus himself at this time? How did the people of Nazareth dress?

What kind of house did Jesus probably live in? What can you tell about the interior of a Jewish house? What of the spirit that ruled in such a household? How did children regard their parents? How did parents feel toward their children?

Do we know any of the games which Jesus played as a boy? How must he have spent most of his spare time? What places were there for him to visit? What one spot was there, of which he must have been particularly fond? What reason is there for thinking that he liked this place? What was to be seen from the hill behind the village? In what directions would he look most curiously? How would he hear something of the great world beyond his home?

What work had Jesus to do? What did the Jews think about labor?

Where was Jesus taught, and what did he learn? What books had he? What was a book in those days? What language did he speak, and what learn to read? What training did he get that was of use to him in after years?

QUESTIONS.

IV.

On what day of the week was the Jewish Sabbath ? How did the Jews observe the day ? What were some of their Sabbath regulations ? How must a child like Jesus have felt about these regulations ?

What was the great event of the day ? What was the synagogue ? Did Jesus go often to this place ? What did he see as he approached the door ? Describe the interior of the synagogue. How did the service begin and proceed ? Was there a regular preacher ? Who delivered the sermon ? How was it different from one of our sermons ? If the people did not like the sermon, what did they do ? How did the service close ?

What was there in the service to impress the mind of a child ? What two kinds of religion did Jesus see in the synagogue ?

Should we think that there was anything in the bearing and appearance of Jesus as a boy to attract attention or win the liking of others ? Could any ordinary boy grow up into such a man as he became ? What must people have felt who looked into his eyes ? How would he rebuke meanness ? What would make him indignant ? Was he fond of society ? Would such a boy as he be popular among his play-fellows ? What elements were blended in his character, as we must believe, from his earliest years ?

QUESTIONS.

V.

At what age did children attain their majority among the Jews? What important journey did Jesus take just before he became of age? What took place in Jerusalem at this time? What was a "Feast," in Palestine?

How did the people of Galilee go to the Passover? How long were they on the road? What were some of the incidents of this mode of travelling? Why was Jerusalem an interesting city for Jesus to visit? What was there, besides its splendid sights, that he would long to behold?

How was the Passover week largely spent? What was the appearance of the city during its continuance? What was the character of the religious ceremonies? Were they of a kind to interest a boy like Jesus? To what place was he particularly attracted?

Where were the schools of the Law? What were the teachers of these schools called? How were the schools conducted?

What happened when the festival was ended? How may it have happened that Jesus became separated from his parents? Do you think he meant to be left behind? How did his parents feel, and what did they do, when they found that their son was not with them? Why did they not find him at once on their return to the city? How long were they searching for him? Where did they find him at last? What did his mother say, and what did Jesus reply? Where did Jesus suppose that his parents would first look for him?

What does this incident teach us about the character of Jesus? What is said of him after his return home?

QUESTIONS.

VI.

WHAT fact about his country would first impress the young mind of Jesus? What did it mean that his people were not free?

Who was Herod Antipas? What kind of man was he? How did the people of Galilee regard him?

Who was the father of Herod Antipas? What reasons had the Jews for disliking Herod the Great? What good deeds had he done? What were some of his evil deeds? What did the people think of his good deeds? What did the Emperor Augustus once say of him? When did Herod the Great die?

Between what two of Herod's sons, and how, was the kingdom divided after his death? What is said of Archelaus? What governor of Judea is best known to us? What story is told of him?

Who was the Emperor of Rome during the youth of Jesus? What was the aim of the rulers of Palestine, who held their office under him? How did the people bear the cruelties of the Romans? What rebellion must Jesus have heard of in his youth?

What is the first reason given why the Jews hated the Romans? What is the second reason? What the third?

What were some of the taxes which the Jews had to pay? Why was the land-tax specially hateful to them?

How must Jesus have felt about the state of his country? Did he probably think at this time that he could do something to help his people when he became a man?



QUESTIONS.

VII.

WHAT was the internal condition of Palestine while it was oppressed by the Romans ? What was the effect of the divisions among the people ? Did Jesus ever belong to any of these parties ? Why should we know something about them ?

From whom are the Sadducees said to have taken their name ? Of what classes of people was this sect composed ? How did they feel toward the Romans ? What reason had they for making friends with the Romans ? What were their two distinctive beliefs ?

What popular party was opposed to the Sadducees ? What does the name "pharisee" mean ? How many Pharisees were there in the time of Christ ? How did their opinions differ from those of the Sadducees, with respect to the Law ? Was their oral Law of much value ? What were some of its regulations ? What is said of the character of the better kind of Pharisees ? What was the great object of the members of the sect who were not good at heart ?

What did the Sadducees say of the Pharisees ? What charge did the Pharisees bring against the Sadducees ? What were the different beliefs of the two parties about a future life ? How must Jesus have felt about their controversies ?

Who were the scribes ? What was one great difference between a scribe and a priest ? How did one get to be a scribe ? Who were the Rabbis ? What famous Rabbi is mentioned ? What saying of his is like our Golden Rule ? What great man was growing up among the Pharisees during the youth of Jesus ?

Who were the Essenes ? Were they a numerous party ? How did they live ? What was their character ? Why did the rest of the nation regard them with some disfavor ? What was a "Nazarite" ? What famous man bore that name ?

Why could not Jesus join any of these parties ? Did he grow up to become like them in any respect ? Wherein did he differ from them ?

QUESTIONS.

VIII.

WHAT was Jesus probably thinking of much of the time, as a young man? Did the rule of the Romans accomplish any good? What was the world like under their dominion? What opportunity was furnished to those who wished to make the world better?

Did the people of that time feel that they were being benefited by the Romans? What was the general feeling at this time? What story was brought to Rome by which the Emperor was disquieted? What were the augurs at Rome teaching? What had Egyptian priests announced?

How did the people of Palestine think they were to be freed from the Roman yoke? What name did they give to their expected king? Why was this hope of theirs a strange one? Did their past history or present strength give them any right to expect wide dominion? How do you suppose they came to have their hope of a Messiah?

When did the Jews of Christ's day think the Messiah would come? What did the Essenes think delayed his coming? What were the Pharisees anxious about? Among whom did the Sadducees expect to find the Messiah? What was the general belief about the manner of his appearing?

What did the people think the Messiah would do for them when he came? What would Jerusalem become? What would be done to the wicked? What was the earth to be under the Messiah's reign?

What did Jesus think about all this? Did he have an ideal of his own about the Messiah's work? Did it ever perhaps enter his mind that he would be called by God to do that work?

QUESTIONS.

IX.

FOR whom were the people of Palestine looking at this time ? What saying of John the Baptist was quickly spread about ? Why were the tidings that John brought, like the cry of "A sail !" to shipwrecked sailors ? What was the effect of his words upon the nation ?

Where was John's early life spent ? In what place was his home ? What induced him to leave his home and go into the Wilderness ? Where and what was this Wilderness ? What food was there to be found ?

What was John's manner of life in the Wilderness ? What was his occupation ? Why was he not afraid of the Roman soldiers like the people who dwelt in the cities ? What reason had the Rabbis given why the Messiah did not appear ? What did John at last resolve to do ?

When did he begin his preaching ? To whom did he first preach ? How was his fame spread through the land ? From what distant places did people come to hear him preach ?

How old was Jesus at the time ? When he heard of John what did he do ? Should we suppose that he was joyful or sad when he set out upon his journey ? What should have made him sorry, and what made him glad ?

When he reached the Jordan, what kind of man did he find John to be ? What were some of the things he heard John say ? How did John address the Pharisees ? What took place after the preaching ? What was the meaning of the rite of baptism ? Can you describe the scene of the baptism as Jesus saw it ?

QUESTIONS.

X.

Do the Gospels agree in their accounts of the baptism of Jesus? When were the Gospels written? Why did not the disciples write a Life of Jesus directly after his death? In what way was the history of his life first carried out into the world?

What would happen to the stories about Jesus as they were repeated over and over? Do we repeat a story exactly as it has been told to us? If we change it, is it because we intend to deceive?

By whom were the Gospels probably written? Where did the writers get their knowledge about Jesus? Why ought we to expect them to disagree in many of their statements? How may we decide in what way the stories ought to be told? Can we be perfectly sure that we are right about them?

For whom was John continually looking during his preaching? What had been the results of his preaching? When did he expect the Messiah to appear? How did John know Jesus to be the Messiah? How would two messengers sent to meet at a certain place, know each other, though they were strangers? Might it have been in some such way that Jesus and John knew they were appointed to meet?

What did John say as Jesus went down into the water to be baptized? What did Jesus answer? What did the answer mean? What did John say to his disciples afterward about his recognition of the Messiah? Is it more wonderful to think that Jesus was made known to John as the Messiah by a dove which descended upon him, or by a voice from God in John's heart?



PART SECOND.

QUESTIONS.

I.

DID John at first tell many of his friends that he had seen the Messiah ? Why did he keep that knowledge somewhat to himself ? What did he think was his duty ?

Where did Jesus go after the baptism ? For what purpose did he seek the retirement of the wilderness ? What illustration is given of the way in which he had accepted the call of God ? Why did he afterward have a conflict to undergo ? What were some of the dangers he had to face ? What were the questions which troubled him ?

When we wish to do right, what contrary impulse do we feel ? What did this opposing voice say to Jesus about taking up the work of the Messiah ?

What had the Prophets said about the Messiah's gifts ? What way was suggested to Jesus by his hunger in which to prove whether he was the Messiah ? What answer did he make to this suggestion ? What did the answer mean ? Where at another time did he seem to be standing ? What did the evil voice again say to him ? What answer did he return this second time ? Where finally did he imagine himself to be ? What was the tempting voice that came to him then ? What did he reply ?

After his doubts and fears had gone, who are said to have come to him ? Do we know anything like that in our experience ? Were the thoughts with which Jesus had contended rather weak, or wicked ? What determination did Jesus form here in the Wilderness ? Was he ever troubled by a return of his doubts ? What was his habitual disposition, notwithstanding his trials ?

QUESTIONS.

II.

CAN we be sure of getting all the incidents told in the Gospels in their right place? Why not? Where is it probable that Jesus went when he came out from the Wilderness?

Did John's disciples recognize Jesus as the Messiah at once? Why were they somewhat slow to do this? What is told of the two young men who followed Jesus? What is said of the appearance of Jesus?

When did Jesus determine to begin his work? Why did he select Galilee? What happened to John at this time? Why did Herod throw him into prison? What effect did this event have on the mind of Jesus?

What difference is pointed out between Jesus and John? What difference was there between the place where John preached, and that in which Jesus began his ministry? What can you tell about the Lake of Galilee? What was the character of the country on its eastern shore? What of its western side?

Why is the climate about the lake very warm? Was the country highly cultivated in the time of Christ? What can you say of the busy life of the people? What were the principal places on the western shore, and where were they situated? What was Tiberias noted for? What gave Capernaum special importance?

What successes did Jesus have in his first preaching? Did he say openly that he was the Messiah? What was his wish in that matter? Did he expect everybody to believe in him? Why did he wish to gather about him a few chosen disciples? What did he say to the fishermen?

What besides his eloquence attracted people to him? How far did his fame spread? What was the result of a few months' labor in Capernaum?



QUESTIONS.

III.

WHAT led Jesus to make journeys to various places about Galilee? How was he welcomed in the villages that he visited? Why were the people of Nazareth particularly anxious to have him come to them? What claim upon him did they think they possessed? What did they expect from his visit?

How did they probably meet Jesus when he entered the place? How did Jesus regard the gifts that God had bestowed upon him? Did the people of Nazareth regard them in the same way? Why was Jesus different from an ordinary man suddenly made famous? How would you feel to have others manifest a vulgar curiosity about something that was sacred to you? Did Jesus wish to perform his "great works" in answer to such a demand as the people made?

Where did Jesus speak in Nazareth? What day of the week was it? What was the text of his discourse? What did he talk to them about at first? What impression did he produce upon them? What other subject did he then take up? Did he rebuke them merely as a man, or did he feel that he was speaking what God wished him to say? What reason did he give why he could not do any of his "great works" among them?

How did the people receive these words? What examples did he refer to in the history of the nation? What did he mean by these references? What did the people understand by them?

What did their anger lead them to do? What was their intention in taking him up to the top of the hill? What was the bearing of Jesus during the excitement? What happened when they arrived at the summit of the hill? Why did not the crowd carry out its purpose?

Did Jesus ever see Nazareth again, so far as we know? What does the incident teach concerning the work Jesus had undertaken? What does it teach us about his character?

QUESTIONS.

IV.

WHERE did Jesus go after the incident at Nazareth? Have we any complete record of his life in Capernaum? What is it said to be like? Did many people think of him as the Messiah at this time? Was he the kind of Messiah they were looking for? Why not?

Can you relate the story of the crazy man in the synagogue at Capernaum? Do people become insane upon religious subjects? Why should this man have been taken with a fit of raving while Jesus was preaching? Is it probable that Jesus believed there was a devil in the man? Why then should he have spoken as he did? What power do we here see that Jesus possessed? What was that power like?

Did Jesus also have power to cure physical disease? Does the state of the mind have something to do with bodily health? Can we tell just how far the body may be reached through the mind? How did Jesus himself look upon his gift of healing? Did it help to extend his fame? What did Jesus say to the man cured of leprosy? Why was he fearful that the people would think too much of his works of healing? What did he wish them to think about most?

Can you relate the story of the man sick with the palsy? What did the Jews think was the cause of sickness? Why should Jesus have said, "Thy sins are forgiven"? Did it matter so much what he said, as to make the man feel his sympathy? What did the people standing by think of Christ's words? What lesson did he resolve to impress upon them?

What was Jesus quick to do on any occasion that offered? What made the people so quick to take offence at his words? Why could they not understand Jesus? What lesson is drawn from the weak eyes of owls and bats?

QUESTIONS.

V.

Of what sin did the Scribes and Pharisees accuse Jesus? How was blasphemy punished in those days? Why were the Pharisees so shocked with Jesus?

Who were the publicans? What was their character as a class? What did the Jews think of them? How were they treated by the Pharisees? Why would not a Pharisee eat with a publican? How did a Pharisee make himself "clean," in the sight of the Law?

What feeling did Jesus have for honest publicans? What did he wish to do for them if they were bad men? What were the circumstances under which Matthew the publican was called to be a disciple? Why did Matthew ask Jesus to dine with him? What did the Pharisees think when they heard that Jesus had gone to Matthew's house? What did they say to some of the disciples? How did Jesus answer them? Were they satisfied with the reply?

What new complaint did they then urge? What answer did Jesus make to this? What illustrations did Jesus use, to show that his disciples were not bound by the old religious customs? What was the effect of all this upon the minds of the Pharisees?

What means did the Pharisees adopt to find something wrong in the conduct of Jesus? What did these spies discover? What use was made of their reports? Why did the Pharisees think it wrong to pluck ears of wheat on the Sabbath? What did they say when Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath? How did Jesus answer them? What did they say about the healing of the insane? What reply did Jesus make to this charge?

Why did the Pharisees wish to make Jesus appear a wicked man? Did they have much influence with the people? What were the feelings of Jesus, as contrasted with their hatred and spite? Is it pity or contempt that the Pharisees most deserved?

QUESTIONS.

VI.

Do we know all the sermons that Jesus preached to the people? What is the sermon called that we know best? What gives it its name? Why should it have been better remembered than others?

How much had the disciples thought about Jesus as the Messiah before this? What were the Pharisees beginning to say? What effect did their opposition have upon the disciples? What did the disciples now demand? Why did Jesus feel that he must in some way answer this demand?

Did Jesus wish to speak his mind fully about the Messiah's work at this time? Why did he prefer to unfold his thought gradually? Why was further delay impossible? What did he have to tell the disciples they must give up? Why was he anxious about what he had to say to them? What was he fearful they might say of him?

Where did Jesus often spend the night, wholly or in part? How did he spend the night before the day on which this sermon was delivered? What may have led the disciples to come to him in the morning? What was in their minds as they went out to find Jesus? What was the first thing done when Jesus met the multitude? What may the disciples have thought that the choosing of the apostles meant?

When Jesus sat down to speak, what did the people probably expect to hear? In what manner did Jesus begin his discourse? What are the first eight verses of the sermon called? What did the disciples quickly understand from these words? Must we suppose that many of them were disappointed? What overcame their disappointment? What did Jesus tell them they might be and do, though they were not to be soldiers under the Messiah?

QUESTIONS.

VII.

WHAT kind of skill did Jesus display in the opening of the Sermon on the Mount? What would have been the result if he had told the disciples bluntly that their ideas were foolish? What did he put in place of their old ideas about the Messiah's kingdom?

What did Jesus mean by saying that the old Law should be fulfilled and not destroyed? What was the great word of the Pharisees? Why did they hold Jesus to be an enemy to righteousness? How did Jesus say his disciples must obey the Law?

What, for example, did he say about the law against murder, and the way that it was to be obeyed? What was the intent of the Law about keeping an oath? What did many people think they might do when they had not made an oath? What did Jesus say about this? How did Jesus wish his disciples to be better than the law which said, "an eye for an eye"? What is not, and what is, the meaning of the saying, "If one shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also"? What did Jesus wish his disciples to do, more than to love their neighbors?

What did Jesus teach as the reason for doing right? To whom did he apply the name "hypocrites"? What is the meaning of that word? What did Jesus teach about prayer? Did he want people to give up thinking about the future, or what did he mean by saying, "Be not anxious for the morrow"? What are the true riches, according to his teaching?

Why should we try to see in others all the good we can? What effect do our feelings have upon the appearance of the world? How can we be like God? What is the "Golden Rule"? How may we illustrate what Jesus said about the "strait gate"? What is one great peril that we must avoid? What did Jesus say, in closing his sermon, that they who followed his teaching should be like?

QUESTIONS.

VIII.

WHAT kind of Messiah did most of the Jews wish God to send them? Would the rule of the Pharisees over other nations have been any better than that of the Romans? How did Jesus hope to make the world what it should be? Could he produce any great change in the condition of his countrymen immediately? How much importance did most people attach to the work he was doing?

Where was John during this time? How did he know what was going on in the outside world? What did he think of the Sermon on the Mount? What was he beginning to fear about Jesus? What question did he send some of his friends to ask Jesus? Why did these friends of John ask their question before all the people?

Why could not Jesus give a direct answer? What would John have understood if he had answered "yes"? Why could he not say "no"? Why did he wish not to offend John? What answer did he return? What did the answer mean? What rebuke did it contain? What wish in the mind of Jesus does this answer show us once more?

What did Jesus say to the people about John, after the messengers had gone? Who did he say was greater than John? What did he mean by the "kingdom of heaven"? What makes a gift most valuable? What makes the noblest religion? What two kinds of religion are there? Why is a little of the best kind better than a great deal of the other?

What does the saying about the "children in the market place" refer to? What charge did the people make against John? What against Jesus? What did Jesus say about this?

QUESTIONS.

IX.

WHAT did the Pharisees call Jesus ? Did they mean this as a term of honor, or reproach ? Why was Jesus the friend of sinners ? What did the Pharisees say of those who suffered because of wrong-doing ? Is it equally easy for all to be good ? Do not they for whom it is hard deserve some pity ? Did the Pharisees think that God pitied sinners ? Why were they afraid to be kind to the sinful ?

How did Jesus feel toward those who had done wrong ? How did they regard him ? What kind of man may we suppose Simon the Pharisee to have been ? For what purpose may he have invited Jesus to dine with him ? How was an honored guest received in Eastern countries ? How was Jesus received by Simon ?

What happened after they had taken their places at table ? Why should the woman who came have been so anxious to get near Jesus ? Describe what took place when she had made her way to the foot of the couch on which Jesus was lying.

What did Simon think when he saw all this ? What conversation followed between Jesus and Simon ? What did Jesus say to the woman ? Why did he say, " Thy sins are forgiven " ? What rebuke did he intend for Simon ? What touched Jesus most, the slight put upon him, or Simon's cruelty to the woman ? What impresses us most in this story ?

QUESTIONS.

X.

WHAT is a parable? Why did Jesus use parables in his teaching? On what occasion did he speak entirely in parables? Where was he standing when he began to speak? What may have furnished the hint for his first parable?

Can you give in your own words the parable of the Sower? That of the Wheat and the Tares? That of the Mustard-Seed? That of the Leaven?

Did the disciples fully understand these parables? What was the task of Jesus like in trying to teach his ideas to the people? What was the answer of Jesus when the disciples asked why he taught in parables? What did Jesus hope for his parables if they were not at once understood? What does this show us about his knowledge of human nature? How does the merchant at a fair attract the people? Why did Jesus put his truth into the form of bright pictures?

Who is the sower, as Jesus explained the parable? What is the meaning of the seed that fell by the wayside? What of that which fell on stony ground? What of that which fell among thorns? What of that which fell on good ground?

What is the meaning of the parable about the Wheat and the Tares? Can you explain the parables of the Mustard-Seed and the Leaven? In what direction was Jesus trying to turn the attention of the people? What is the fountain of all actions? What is necessary to secure right conduct?

QUESTIONS.

XI.

WHEN did Jesus choose twelve of his disciples to be always near him? Do you remember what these twelve were called? Where did Jesus sometimes go with them, and why?

Why did much depend upon the courage and fidelity of these men? What illustration is given about a sea captain? How does this illustration show what the task of Jesus was like? What was the special care of Jesus, all the time he was going about among the people?

What now did he direct the twelve to do? Why was he somewhat anxious about the success of their mission? If their preaching proved a failure, what difference would that make to him?

In his instructions, why did Jesus tell them to go to the villages of their own people? What message were they to carry? Why were they told never to take pay for their services? What were they to do if people would not listen to them? What had happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? What did Jesus mean by his reference to the punishment of these places?

How were the disciples to shame men out of their wrong doing? What did Jesus mean when he told them they must be as "wise as serpents"? What promise did he give them in case they were arrested? Why were they not to be afraid, though the judge threatened to put them to death? Of what did Jesus wish them to be more afraid than of being killed?

With what beautiful promises did Jesus close his instructions to the apostles? What can you say of the difficulty and uncertainty of their undertaking?

QUESTIONS.

XII.

WHAT Gospel tells of visits which Jesus made to Jerusalem ? Does this Gospel say much of the Ministry in Galilee ? Do the other Gospels speak of visits to Jerusalem during the work in Galilee ? How may we explain this difference ? What reason have we to speak of one of these visits to Jerusalem, made after the disciples had been sent out to preach ?

What may we suppose one purpose of this visit to have been ? Why could Jesus find more rest in Jerusalem than in Galilee ? Walking one Sabbath morning through Jerusalem, where did Jesus find himself ? What was this Pool of Bethesda ? Why did the people resort to it ? What did they think caused the bubbling of the water ? What occurred as often as this was observed ?

Did the people about the place know Jesus ? What took place while he was walking among them ? What more particularly caught the attention of Jesus ? What success did this man have in trying to get into the water ? What did Jesus say to him after he had gone back to his mat ? What did the man reply ? What may he have hoped Jesus would do for him ? What command did Jesus give to him ? Did the man stop to thank Jesus for his cure ? What happened when he reached the street ?

What did the Pharisees suspect when they heard what the man said ? What did they wish to do with Jesus ? What infamous part did they set the man to perform ? Describe his meeting with Jesus in the Temple. What took place when the man had pointed out Jesus to the Pharisees ? What does this incident show concerning the success Jesus was likely to have in Jerusalem ? What was he sure to meet wherever he turned ?

QUESTIONS.

XIII.

At what time in the life of Jesus was John thrown into prison? What news about John reached Jesus as he was on the way to join his disciples? Do we know what success the disciples had met with in their preaching?

What impression did the death of John produce throughout the country? What similar event in our own time may it be compared with? Why had Herod wished to kill John before? What had prevented him? At whose request is it said that John was finally put to death? Is there any reason to suppose that the Pharisees had something to do with his murder?

How did the death of John affect the plans of Jesus? Had he reason to think that he would be the next victim of the Pharisees' hate? Was he afraid to die? Why was he not ready to give up his life? What did he determine to do? What movement among the people did he fear, if he remained among them? Did Jesus wish to have war? Would his people have gained anything through a war? In what way did Jesus mean to make them more than a match for the armies of Rome?

What illustration is given of a city with a cruel king? How does this illustration apply to the position of Jesus at this time? Could Jesus have made himself king? Why did he not care to be king? What had he to think of beside his own safety? How could he best accomplish this purpose?

How did Jesus leave Capernaum? Where did he go? What was the action of the people? What course did Jesus next adopt? Who had followed him from Jerusalem? What did these spies now undertake to do? What question did they put to Jesus? Was Jesus afraid of them? What accusation did he bring against them in reply? What was the effect of his words? What did the disciples fear? What did they say to their Master? What did he reply? Why did Jesus think best to go immediately away? Where did he go?

QUESTIONS.

XIV.

WHAT Province was north of Galilee in the time of Christ ? What two principal cities did it contain ? What can you say of the people of Phœnicia ? How were they regarded by the Jews ? Why did the Jews both hate and fear them ? Would the Pharisees enter the Phœnician territory ? Why not ? Were there any Jews in that country ? What had drawn them thither ?

What led Jesus to select Phœnicia as a place of refuge ? How long did he remain there ? Did Jesus despair of final success ? Had the Pharisees some reasons for thinking that they had entirely beaten him ? What had they done about closing the Synagogues ? How did this make the work of Jesus more difficult ? Did the Pharisees think that Jesus had run away through fear of them ? Did he go away because he was afraid ? Did he expect to return to his own country ? What good came from his enforced retirement ?

Relate the story of the Phœnician woman who came to Jesus, asking him to heal her daughter ? What did the disciples mean by saying, " Send her away " ? What did Jesus reply to them ? What must we suppose they had been talking about in order to understand the reply ? What did Jesus mean by saying, " It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to dogs " ? What apt rejoinder did the woman make ? Why did her answer please Jesus ? Do you think it possible for Jesus to have healed a person whom he had never seen ? What did the Jews call the people of other nations ? Did Jesus share their prejudices ?

QUESTIONS.

XV.

WHERE did Jesus go when he left the country of Tyre and Sidon? How did the people greet him on his entrance to Galilee? Were the Pharisees on the watch for him? What demand did they make of him? What was their design? What did Jesus call them? What did Jesus now see to be the fact about his work in Galilee?

What course was he once more obliged to take? In what direction and toward what place did he go this time? What can you say of the country toward Cæsarea? What questions were in the mind of Jesus? How may we imagine him on his wanderings?

After he had decided upon his purpose, what questions did he ask of his disciples? How and by whom was the latter question answered? Did the answer give Jesus pleasure? What did the ready response of Simon show to Jesus about the faith of his disciples? What did Jesus say to Simon? What new name did he give him? What dream is used by way of illustration? How does this help to show us what Jesus felt?

Where had Jesus resolved to go? What did he foresee would happen to him there? How did he expect to triumph, though he should be killed? What did the disciples think when he told them his purpose? Who tried to persuade him not to go? How did Jesus answer Peter? What did he mean by calling him Satan?

Was this a happy time in the life of Jesus? What made it so? What event closes the second part of the story? What can you tell of the Transfiguration? What may it symbolize for us? What other event is referred to at the end of the first part of the narrative? Why do these two events stand out so clearly in the story?

PART THIRD.

QUESTIONS.

I.

WHY could not Jesus go on with his work in Galilee? What had he to fear if he went to Jerusalem? What two courses of action were left to him? Why could he not remain outside his native land? What made it easier for him to decide to go back? What effect did he hope that his death would have on the minds of his disciples? Where did he determine to end his career? Why did he choose Jerusalem?

Passing through Galilee, where did he pause for a time? How was he received by his disciples there? If Jesus told them that it was their last meeting, why did they not pay more heed to his words? What did they expect him to do in Jerusalem?

What question did the disciples ask Jesus at this time? How did he answer them? What wrong feeling had he seen among his followers? What did he tell them to think about most? Of whose feelings did he tell them to be most careful? What did he say about wronging the little ones? How were the disciples to deal with people who had injured them?

Of whom did he think they might be afraid, when he had left them? What did he say to them about not being fearful? May we think that Jesus was encouraged by this meeting with his disciples? What question did Peter ask after Jesus had ceased speaking? How was it answered? What parable did Jesus add to what he had said? What lesson did he draw from it?

Who were present at this meeting beside the disciples? What did they now attempt to do? What did they say to Jesus? What was his reply? Was Jesus afraid of the Pharisees, after all that they had done to him?

QUESTIONS.

II.

Who left Galilee in the company of Jesus? Why did many of the disciples wish to go with him? Could they give Jesus any real help? Do we know certainly by what road Jesus left Galilee? What does the Gospel of Luke say about this? Are there reasons for thinking that Gospel mistaken on this point? Was Luke one of the twelve?

What may we infer from the Gospel of Matthew, as to the road taken by Jesus? What reason is given why he should have preferred the road through Peræa? What can you say of this road? How long did it take Jesus and his company to reach the lower Jordan? In what province were they when they crossed the river? How did this country differ from the one they had passed through? What brought so many people upon the road at this time?

How did the Pharisees of this part of the country regard Jesus? In what way did they try to annoy him? What beautiful incident occurred at this time? Describe how the children were brought to Jesus, and what then took place. Were children fond of Jesus?

What question was asked by a young man? What can you say of the character and position of this young man? What conversation followed between him and Jesus? What did Jesus mean by keeping the Law? Had the young man kept it as perfectly as he supposed? Why should Jesus have told him to give up all his possessions? Did he care whether people were rich or poor? What did Jesus say to his disciples after the young man had gone? What did he wish them to feel?

QUESTIONS.

III.

WHAT sad thought was in the mind of Jesus during this journey? Did the disciples share this sadness? What made them hopeful about the future? Why did their surroundings make it difficult for them to remember what Jesus had said? What did they think might be the reason of his speaking so sadly? Why did he wish to prepare their minds for coming trial? What did he again tell them would happen to him in Jerusalem? Did these words produce some impression upon their minds? Why was not this impression more lasting?

What were the disciples expecting their portion to be, as friends of the Messiah? What made them jealous of each other? What woman was in the company? What did she wish for her two sons? What favor did she ask of Jesus? Did her sons join in the request? How did Jesus answer them? To what were they looking forward, and what did Jesus see before them? What question did he ask them? Was he angry with them, or did he pity them? Who alone could give places of honor in the Kingdom of Heaven?

How may the other disciples have heard of this interview? What were their feelings about it? How did Jesus quiet the quarrel that thus arose? What did he say about James and John? What did he teach as the way to win places of honor and fame? What was the effect of this upon the two brothers?

What place did they now enter? Did they remain some time in Jericho? Where is it said that Jesus lodged? How was he occupied during his stay in this place? What was the result of his labors? How was the company of the disciples enlarged when they again set forth?

QUESTIONS.

IV.

WHAT is the character of the road from Jericho to Jerusalem ? What parable has its scene laid in this locality ? What time of year was it when Jesus passed over this road ? What kind of company attended him ? What were they expecting in Jerusalem ? What lightened the heart of Jesus at this time ? Why did he take some pride and satisfaction in feeling that the people would do his bidding ?

What hill lies on the eastern side of Jerusalem ? When the traveller reaches its summit, what does he see ? What then separates him from the city ? What led Jesus to halt on the top of this hill ? What were the disciples thinking as they stood there ? What shout broke from their lips ? Was Jesus at all moved by the triumphant feelings of his followers ? Why was he willing to enter the city something like a conqueror ?

What animal was brought for him to ride ? How did the disciples spread a carpet before him ? What attracted the notice of people within the city ? Describe the advance of the throng toward the city gates. What question was asked of the disciples ? What demand was made upon Jesus by the Pharisees ? What was his reply ?

Whither did Jesus at once lead his followers ? What was the outer court of the Temple called ? Why was this name given it ? What can you say of this " Court of the Gentiles " ? What sounds reached the ear of Jesus as he stood there ? What traffic was being carried on within the Temple ? Were the priests right in allowing the presence of these traders inside the Temple ?

What occurred as Jesus stood looking at these men ? What did he say to them ? What was the result of his command ? Was Jesus angry at this time ? Why should we be glad that he gave way to his anger ? Why could not the Pharisees, after this, treat him as if he were of no importance ? How did his bold action increase the respect of the people ?

QUESTIONS.

V.

WHERE did Jesus go to spend the night? Where was Bethany? On his return to the Temple the next morning, what did he find? What impression upon the people did his teaching produce? Did Jesus disclose to them that he was the Messiah? Why not?

Why were the priests angry with him? What did they resolve to do? What was their plan? Did Jesus hold any office? What did they hope would happen if he publicly acknowledged this? If he claimed authority from heaven, what would be their course? What question did they ask him? Was he troubled by their question? What did he ask of them in return? What did the priests think about John? Why did they not dare to say what they thought? How did they reply to the question of Jesus? What then did Jesus say to them?

Why did they not go away when their plan had failed? What were they obliged to hear? What was the first of the two parables Jesus addressed to them? How did he apply it to their case? Did they deserve what he said of them? What did their religion consist of? What words of Jesus probably cut most deeply into their pride?

What was the second parable? What was its meaning? Why did it please the disciples? What did Jesus say to the priests about the Kingdom of God? What quotation did he make from the Scriptures? What meaning did he give to these words? What did the Pharisees and the priests now attempt to do? Why did they not succeed? Where did Jesus go at the close of this day's labors?

QUESTIONS.

VI.

WHAT reason had the leaders of different parties to band together to oppose Jesus? Who appeared to possess most power, they, or he? Were they honest in thinking that Jesus was not the Messiah? What was the true cause of their hatred toward him?

What evidence did they need in order to arrest Jesus? What kind of charge did they wish to bring against him? What crime did they think he might be led to commit, that the Romans punished with death? How would it suit their purpose if he were to speak of the Romans in a friendly manner?

Whom did they now put forward to ask a question? What was the question? Was Jesus deceived as to their intent? Relate the conversation about the tribute money. Was it cunning that enabled Jesus to escape the difficulty prepared for him by his enemies? What command did he thus enforce upon his hearers?

Who now came forward to puzzle Jesus? What was the next question asked by the Pharisees? What did Jesus give as the first and second commandments? Why may we say with the scribe that he had "answered well"? With what question did he finally put his assailants to silence? What did he mean to teach them by this question?

What made Jesus indignant as these men stood before him? What did he say to the people about the Scribes and Pharisees? What are some of the accusations that he denounced against them? What change then came over the feeling of Jesus? What had he longed to do? What were the last sorrowful words that he uttered in the Temple?

QUESTIONS.


VII.

WHERE did Jesus stop, for a few moments, as he was leaving the Temple? What boxes were placed in this "Court of the Women"? What did Jesus see as he stood watching the people? What did he say to his disciples about the poor widow? To what truth about the judgments of God did he thus call attention?

In what direction did Jesus go after leaving the Temple? Where was the finest view of that building to be seen? What did the disciples say, as they were looking at it? How did Jesus reply? Did the disciples know what he meant? What did they remember of his former sayings? What did they ask him to tell them?

To whom may Jesus be likened, in view of the troubles that were coming upon the nation? What sad events did Jesus see before his people? Did these events actually occur? What future did he expect for his disciples amid these troubles?

What can you remember of the discourse of Jesus on the Mount of Olives? What did he say of the day when his predictions were to be fulfilled? What were his disciples therefore to do? Who were they to be like? What did he predict for the seed of truth that he had planted? What does this show about the judgment of Jesus? What was the fate of the few who believed on him during his life? What was the result of their labors? What parables are given in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew? Where did Jesus go after the discourse was finished?



QUESTIONS.

VIII.

WHAT were the priests doing while Jesus remained in Bethany? Why did they not arrest Jesus in Jerusalem? Why did they not send to Bethany? From what unexpected quarter did they receive an offer of help? What proposal did Judas make to the priests? Why can we not think that he had always been a bad man? What place had he held among the disciples? How had he probably received the preaching of Jesus? What effect did the religion of the Temple probably have on his mind? What did he begin to think about Jesus? Was he perhaps influenced partly by his disappointment? What may we suppose that he himself thought of his conduct?

Did Jesus know what Judas was about? How could he have known this? Did he tell the other disciples, or make any attempt to stop Judas? Why not? What day did the feast of the Passover begin? How was this feast opened? Describe the preparations for the Passover Supper, and tell of what it consisted?

Where did Jesus celebrate this supper? Had he ever before been with his disciples on this occasion? Did he ever eat with them again? What was the significance of the supper to the eleven faithful disciples? How did Judas bear himself? What did Jesus see from his manner? What did Jesus suddenly say to the disciples? How did they receive his words? Did he say who was to betray him? Why not? What did he say to Judas as that disciple was leaving the room? Did the others know what this meant?

What was the general purpose of the discourse of Jesus after Judas had gone? What ceremony did Jesus perform at the close of the supper? What was the meaning of this ceremony?

QUESTIONS.

IX.

WHAT was the law about the ending of the Passover supper ? At about what hour did Jesus and the disciples set out to return to Bethany ? Did Jesus expect to see Bethany again ? What did he think would happen before he reached there ? Was he frightened at the thought of his arrest ? By what anxiety was his spirit troubled ?

What did Jesus say to Peter as they were preparing to depart ? What was Peter's answer ? What prediction did Jesus make concerning Peter ? What did he mean by saying that all the disciples would be offended in him ? What did he say to them about taking care of themselves ? What was said about the two swords ?

What kind of night was it, when they left the house in Jerusalem ? In what direction did they go ? Where did Jesus turn aside from the path ? Whom had he perhaps seen in the distance ? What two reasons had he for waiting the approach of Judas on the Mount of Olives ? What was the name of the garden that he entered ? What did he here say to the disciples ? Whom did he take with him as he went forward to pray ? What were the words of his prayer ? Why was he so sorrowful at this time ?

When he arose from his prayer, in what condition did he find the disciples ? What did he say to them ? What did he pray the second time ? Can you make a picture of the scene in words ? Was Jesus made stronger by his prayer ? What did he say again to the sleeping disciples ? Why did he suddenly call them to awake ?

What did the disciples see as they rose to their feet ? What part did Judas play in the arrest of Jesus ? What did Jesus say to the traitor ? What did he say to the officers ? What was done to him at the bidding of the officers ? What became of the disciples ? Where was Jesus conducted ?

QUESTIONS.

X.

WHERE did the trial of Jesus take place? What was the name of the court or council before which he was tried? Who was president of the Sanhedrim? If the Sanhedrim condemned a man to death, what was done with him? Why had the High Priest summoned the judges to his palace before daylight? What were these judges determined to do? Could Jesus have had a fair trial before such men?

Where was Jesus taken by the soldiers? How did the judges sit, and where was Jesus placed? What was the charge against him? What testimony was brought against him? For what reason did the evidence fail to satisfy the High Priest? What was the bearing of Jesus while this was taking place? Why had he said nothing? What did the High Priest now say to Jesus? Did Jesus make any reply?

Why had not the real charge against Jesus been brought forward? Why did the High Priest ask Jesus if he was the Messiah? Why was Jesus ready to speak on this theme? In what solemn form of words did the High Priest address him? In what way did he think to deceive Jesus? How did Jesus answer? What was the effect of his answer upon the High Priest? How did the High Priest show his anger? What did he say to the judges? What did the judges reply? How did they treat Jesus after they had pronounced him guilty? How did Jesus receive their taunts and blows.

Where was Peter during this scene? Can you tell the story of Peter's denial? Where was Jesus taken as soon as it was day? From the council-chamber where was he conducted? Where did Pilate meet the priests and their prisoner? How did Pilate feel toward the Jews? Had he already heard of Jesus? Why was he ready to take Jesus' part? What answers did Jesus make to Pilate's questions? Whom did Pilate offer to release, according to the Passover custom? Whom did the priests demand instead? Who was Barabba? What did they cry out to have done to Jesus? Why did Pilate at last yield to their demand?

QUESTIONS.

XI.

WHAT was the character of the Roman people? What part of the nation was the most brutal? What class of soldiers was most depraved? Who had charge of Jesus after he had received sentence from Pilate? What punishment did they inflict upon him? What led them to make this whipping unusually severe? How did they attempt to turn Jesus into ridicule? How did Jesus bear their insults?

What put an end to the guilty sport of the soldiers? By whom was Jesus joined at the gate of the palace? Why were these thieves sent to death at the same time? What inscription had Pilate prepared to be borne before Jesus? Why did Pilate call Jesus "The King of the Jews"?

What was the cross? What part of it was Jesus obliged to carry? Were many people yet informed of the arrest of Jesus? Why could not people easily recognize him, as he was led through the streets? Who did recognize him? What did Jesus say to these women? Why could he not carry his cross? Who was forced to carry it for him? What Roman custom does this illustrate?

What was the name of the place where the procession finally stopped? What kind of place may we suppose it to have been? What drink was here offered to Jesus? Why would he not take it? What was now done to him? What did Jesus say while the work of crucifixion was being performed? How did the soldiers occupy themselves while they were standing guard? What did the enemies of Jesus say to him while he was hanging on the cross? Were any of his friends near him? What did he say to one of the disciples about his mother? What words from the Psalms did he use in his suffering? Do these words mean that he had lost faith? How was drink given him to allay his thirst? What were the last words of Jesus?

QUESTIONS.

XII.

Who went to Pilate asking for the body of Jesus? Why did Joseph make this request? What probably induced the governor to grant this favor? What was done with the body of Jesus? When was the burial? What great event is said to have taken place the next day but one? What festival celebrates this event? Why do we observe Sunday as a day of worship?

Is it easy to determine all the facts about the Resurrection? Do the Gospels agree in telling the story? What do they state as a fact that we cannot believe? How were some of the Gospel stories changed after they were first written? Why may we suppose that this of the Resurrection has been changed?

What account of this event has been left by the Apostle Paul? Did he believe that the dead body of Jesus rose and ascended to heaven? What may we believe the earliest testimony to have been?

Relate the story as told in the Gospel of John. How much of this may we believe? What may we believe that Jesus said to the women? Are the particulars of the story of great consequence? What is all that we need to know about it? In what state of mind were the disciples after the arrest and crucifixion? What effect did the news of the resurrection have upon them?

What belief helped to sustain the Christians through the persecutions that afterward arose? Is it reasonable to suppose that their heroism came from belief in a falsehood? Did people have a strong belief in the future life when Jesus began his work? Could he have made heaven very real to them simply by telling them about it? What made it so certain in their regard? What last command and promise were given by Jesus? What meaning have these words for us?



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